

TELEVISION

Darling Buds and full two-day guide

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ON THE WARDS

Sister Angela brushes off closure.

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Who was Vermeer's guitar player?

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THE TIMES

No. 64,525

SATURDAY DECEMBER 26 1992

50p

Harsh political realities overshadow Bethlehem's message of hope

Israel bars aid from Red Cross

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN MARI AZ-ZAHOUR AND BEN LYNSFIELD IN JERUSALEM

YITZHAK Rabin, the Israeli prime minister, overrode strong opposition inside his own cabinet yesterday and blocked Red Cross supplies bound for the 415 deported Palestinians in Lebanon.

At the Israeli cabinet voted by eight to six for the ban, with two abstentions, an epidemic of dysentery spread through the deportees' tents in southern Lebanon after the last drops of potable water were exhausted.

The cabinet held a hastily arranged session after Mr Rabin and Shimon Peres, the foreign minister, disagreed over the Red Cross request. Led by Mr Peres, dissenting ministers argued for flexibility, saying Israel had nothing to lose by letting aid through.

Yesterday some of the Palestinians were eating snow while others were trying to boil water from a filthy brown stream. Equipped with only a few dirty metal cooking-pots,

groups were scavenging the barren hillside for firewood. A United Nations water truck has been refused entry since Monday by a Lebanese government claiming the problem is all Israel's.

Lebanon tightened its blockade, allowing through only journalists, and no relief supplies. An army captain ordered a search to ensure that no foodstuffs were being smuggled in. Now in the eighth day of an ordeal condemned by the Pope in his Christmas day message, the exiles have begun to limit meals to one a day to try to save food supplies that the international Red Cross estimate will run out in 48 hours.

Elias Freij, mayor of Bethlehem in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, claimed the expulsions had cast "a shadow of gloom, anger and frustration" over the town.

Left to shiver, page 10



Sign of faith: British pilgrims in Bethlehem light candles yesterday in the Church of the Nativity, said to stand where Jesus was born

Bush is denounced by Iran-Contra prosecutor

■ Pardons for six of President Reagan's officials named in the Iran-Contra affair will darken the last days of the Bush presidency and lead to a debate in the US about the powers of the White House

FROM JAMIE DETTMER IN WASHINGTON

ANGRY exchanges between Democrats and Republicans over President Bush's decision to pardon six former officials in the Reagan administration for their involvement in the Iran-Contra affair rocked Washington yesterday.

Within hours of Mr Bush's announcement extending full pardons to Caspar Weinberger, the former defence secretary who was due to face trial on January 5, and five other Reagan aides, Lawrence Walsh, the independent Iran-Contra prosecutor, declared that the president himself was now the subject of investigation. Speaking on television, Mr Walsh alleged that in pardoning Mr Weinberger, the president had pardoned a "man who committed the same type of misconduct that he did".

Prosecutors heading the investigation into the arms-for-hostages deals with Iran denounced the president and claimed that he has been



pardoned Robert McFarlane, the former national security adviser, Elliott Abrams, the former assistant secretary of state, and three former CIA officials, Clair George, Alan Fiers and Duane "Dewey" Clarridge. Mr McFarlane, Mr Abrams and Mr Fiers all pleaded guilty charges of keeping information; Mr George was convicted of two counts of lying to Congress committee and Mr Clarridge was scheduled to go to trial in March on seven counts of perjury and making false statements to Congress.

In his proclamation granting "executive clemency" to Mr Weinberger and the others, Mr Bush described the pardons as part of a "healing tradition" as old as America itself. He cited several examples of presidential pardons, including President Andrew Johnson's pardoning of Confederate soldiers after the American Civil War and the clemency granted by Harry Truman and Jimmy Carter of second world war and Vietnam War draft dodgers.

He sought to suggest that the Christmas eve pardons were appropriate for the conclusion of a conflict, the Cold War. Mr Bush did not mention that Gerald Ford had, as president, pardoned Richard Nixon in 1974 for involvement in the Watergate affair. Commentators pointed out

yesterday that Mr Ford granted the Nixon pardon before he faced an election, rather than after one.

Independent prosecutors said they believed that Mr Bush had acted, in part, to head off a trial that could have led to embarrassing questions about his role in the 1983 and 1986 sale of arms to Iran and the illegal supply of weapons to Nicaraguan Contra rebels.

Republicans dismissed the claim, asserting that Mr Walsh's enquiry had been politically malicious. Senator Robert Dole welcomed the pardons. "Lawrence Walsh and his desperate henchmen would have stopped at nothing to validate their reckless \$35 million (£22.8 million) inquiry, even if it meant twisting justice to fit their partisan schemes," he said.

Conservatives had lobbied Mr Bush since the election to grant the pardons. There was some concern in the administration that it would be difficult to grant pardons to officials who had not even been convicted let alone faced trial. Last night, constitutional lawyers said they feared that the pardons granted to Mr Weinberger and Mr Clarridge might provoke Congress to look at the unrestricted presidential powers of pardon.

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Carey hits out at 'mean challenge' to authority

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, yesterday criticised those who attack people in authority. Other church leaders reflected in their Christmas sermons on the implications of the debates surrounding the monarchy.

In his Christmas day sermon at Canterbury Cathedral, Dr Carey said: "Our British reputation for ribbing ourselves in danger of degenerating into an uncharismatic meanness of spirit. At the levels of both social and family life we see many signs of materialism and acquisitiveness." Issues of ultimate

scandal. We are ready to believe the worst." The Dean of St Paul's, the Very Rev Eric Evans, said the nation had been shocked and saddened by events such as the separation of the Prince and Princess of Wales. "Public confidence has been shaken, but happily, not irreparably so."

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Mother killed as car hits revellers

BY PETER VICTOR

A YOUNG mother was killed and nine people were injured yesterday and motorists throughout the country struggled with treacherous weather which police said was likely to persist through the weekend.

Sarah Monelle, 21, was killed and nine other revellers were injured when they were hit by a car after a rugby club party at Keynsham, near Bath. Police arrested a 25-year-old motorist after a breath-test.

Detectives in Streatham, south London, are investigating the death of a man found with head injuries by fire fighters dousing a blaze at a flat. Police are not sure of the identity of the man, who was tied to a bed with his head in a blood-soaked bag.

A woman aged 70 and her son, 30, were found dead in their caravan on Christmas Eve at Upchurch, near Sittingbourne, Kent. Police believe that the man strangled his mother and cut her throat.

A man aged 20 died after a blaze while Christmas dinner was being prepared at a foster home in Caernarvon, Gwynedd, and a pensioner in her 80s was killed in her burning house in Didcot, Oxfordshire.

Treacherous road conditions with ice and freezing fog led to several accidents. A driver was killed when his Vauxhall Carlton somersaulted on the A303 near Andover, Hampshire.

The weather disrupted today's racing, with Huntingdon, Market Rasen and Wetherby lost to sub-zero conditions, and Sedgfield and Wincanton cancelled.

The weather in England and Wales will remain dull and misty today. Much of Scotland will be dry, bright and sunny after a frosty start. Southern Scotland and northern Ireland will be cloudy.

Weather, page 16
Sport, pages 17-23

The Cheshire get an alarm call from the hills

FROM BILL FROST
IN VITEZ



BRITISH troops were woken very early on Christmas morning by the thunder of heavy artillery in the hills above their base. They have grown used to the sound and fury of war in central Bosnia but had hoped that a ceasefire brokered by Lt Col Bob Stewart, their commanding officer, would allow them a brief respite. It proved just as hollow and frustrating as all the others.

The big gun, nicknamed Nora by the men of the Cheshire, made windows shake with every rumbling report. Croatian gunners in the hills also fired off hundreds of pink tracer rounds, not for any military purpose but to celebrate Christmas.

Hours later, the men of the Cheshire were gently woken again by their officers and offered cups of morning tea laced with a liberal slug of rum or whisky. The Christmas tradition is peculiar to infantry regiments, and appropriately enough the potent beverage is known as "gunfire". After breakfast in the draughty field

cookhouse, some of the men trudged through mud and snow flurries to queue outside a makeshift phone box. Each soldier was allowed a 10-minute call home. Back in the cookhouse, preparations were beginning for Christmas lunch. There were 120 turkeys to roast and 140 Christmas puddings, 18 gallons of tomato soup,

18 more of brandy sauce. Officers and NCOs acted as waiters as the men ate. There was glee on one young private's face as he waved in fond acknowledgement to a sergeant major and told him not to spill the soup.

Such seasonal concessions aside, Christmas was a working day like any other for the Cheshire. There were

patrols to be mounted and aid convoys to escort through the mountain roads. The troops know that without their protection the lorries will be looted.

A group of soldiers told how they had escorted food convoys to distribution centres only to see the boxes hauled away by Croatian forces. One corporal said: "It makes my blood boil. These refugees are starving. We bring the food and that lot just snatch it from their mouths."

The Cheshires see anguish and suffering at first hand. Yesterday they took their own presents to orphanages in their zone. Children left traumatised by their experiences smiled as they accepted packets of sweets; others gazed blankly or in terror at their benefactors.

Enlisted men find Bosnia a sinister puzzle with no solution. One veteran of Northern Ireland said: "This place makes South Armagh look like EuroDisney. You'd think at Christmas they might accept our ceasefire suggestion. Not them, though; they are locked into killing."

Nationalist demand, page 9

N&P'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT TO SAVERS



Reflecting on a sombre year in her Christmas message to the Commonwealth, the Queen drew hope and inspiration from her religious faith and the example of others.

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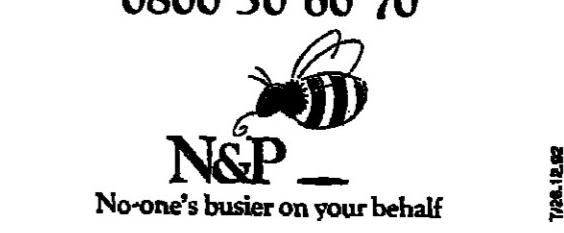
concern were being replaced by short-term goals, he said. "The ordination of women is important; but not as important as the mission to proclaim the love and grace of God."

At York Minster, Dr John Habgood, Archbishop of York, criticised the "muddle nudge, wink-wink" society. "We are eager to cut people down to size. We lap up

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Convicted child-killer joins hunger strike

One of the three men convicted in 1979 of the murder of newspaper delivery boy Carl Bridgewater yesterday joined a Christmas hunger strike by prisoners protesting their innocence. Jim Robinson, serving life in Gartree, Leicestershire, after being found guilty of the murder of the teenager, was one of 28 prisoners in various jails refusing food.

Nineteen inmates at Long Lartin top security jail near Evesham, Hereford and Worcester, began the protest on Christmas eve and were joined by nine prisoners at other jails. Robinson, who was 45 when he was jailed, has long maintained his innocence, as have Michael Hickey and his cousin Vincent Hickey, who were convicted with him.

Kenneth Clarke, the home secretary, is expected to decide early in the new year whether to refer the case back to the Court of Appeal. Earlier this year a dossier on 22 prisoners in Long Lartin was sent to the royal commission on the criminal justice system. Inadequate facilities, page 6

Church's ceasefire plea

Cardinal Cahal Daly, the head of the Roman Catholic church in Ireland, has urged the IRA to call a permanent ceasefire. He implored its leaders to extend their 72-hour Christmas truce, due to end at midnight tomorrow. Cardinal Daly, speaking at midnight mass at St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh City, said a small group of men had the power to ensure a truce was observed. The RUC reported one gun attack involving the Irish National Liberation Army since the ceasefire started on Christmas eve. Letters, page 13

Pensioner raped

A 67-year-old woman was raped as she returned home from a Christmas eve midnight mass. She was walking near the centre of Ludlow, Shropshire, at about 1.30am when she became aware of a man following her. He dragged her into nearby gardens where she was raped. West Mercia police are linking the incident to an attack 90 minutes earlier on a 25-year-old woman half a mile away. In both cases the attacker was described as aged 25-35, 5ft 6in to 5ft 8in tall, slim and wearing a leather biker-style jacket.

Raider returns cash

One of three masked men who broke into the home of a 70-year-old woman in Scotswood, Newcastle upon Tyne, and stole £4 after telling her to stay in bed, returned a few hours later to hand back the money and give her a cuddle. A police spokesman said yesterday: "At least they showed some remorse by giving back the few pounds they had stolen."

Service held for baby

A service was held in Millom, Cumbria, yesterday at the grave of the baby boy whose charred and dismembered body was found on a rubbish tip in the town three years ago, triggering Cumbria's biggest murder enquiry. Nobody has ever been charged and the identity of the baby, 15 to 18 months old when he died, has never been established.

Widow murder charge

A man was charged last night with the murder of Sarah Burke, the widow aged 99 who was attacked in her bed at a county council residential home in Redruth, Cornwall last Sunday morning. The unnamed man, 21, from Redruth, will appear before magistrates in Penzance today. He was arrested after a tip-off about bloodstained clothing.

Branson may pursue BA over alleged dirty tricks

By RICHARD FORD AND PAUL SPIKE

VIRGIN Atlantic is understood to be considering pursuit of its allegations that British Airways indulged in unfair business practices, in spite of legal moves to settle multi-million pound libel actions involving the two companies.

Richard Branson's rival airline may threaten to take action under US anti-trust laws and the Treaty of Rome over alleged "dirty tricks" and unfair competition practices relating to sales and marketing tactics.

As lawyers for both companies prepare to announce that an agreement has been reached in the libel claim and counter-claim involving Lord King of Wartnaby, chairman of BA, and Mr Branson, a public relations consultant said that his links with British Airways would be made difficult if any settlement damaged his reputation.

Brian Basham, chief executive of Warwick Communications, said: "If it were true that BA had decided to settle on terms or in a form which damages my reputation, that would obviously put me into conflict with them as a client."

Mr Basham, who has worked on behalf of BA senior management for six years, said he had always urged his clients to settle the actions, which are due to be heard at the High Court next month. The high-profile case was caused by allegations that BA was behind a "dirty trick".

Mr Basham said: "I am not party to the court case and it would be improper for me to comment on this action."

Air turbulence: Richard Branson, left, wants an apology, damages and court costs from Lord King



Message reflects royal family's swings and roundabouts



Faith gives Queen strength for a new year of service

By ALAN HAMILTON

REFLECTING on a sombre year for herself and for the world at large, the Queen, in her Christmas message to the Commonwealth yesterday, drew hope and inspiration from her religious faith and from the examples of others who, she said, had put her own troubles into perspective.

In a tribute to the late Lord Cheshire VC, the Queen disclosed that the worries of the

past year had been put in their proper place by a visit from the founder of the Cheshire Homes for the Disabled, in the last stages of terminal illness. What had struck the Queen was not only his fortitude but his desire to help others, an inspiration arising from faith. "I and my family, as we approach a new year, will draw strength from this faith in our commitment to your service in the coming years," the Queen said.

The Queen acknowledged that, like many families, the royal family had lived through some difficult days this year. But she avoided specific reference to troubles that have included the separation from their wives of her two elder sons.

The Queen recorded her message on Monday at Sandringham, and looked slightly solemn, with an occasional hint of nervousness.

After so much personal misfortune, the Queen returned to a previous theme of Christian faith, and also emphasised the

theme of continuity, recalling that she had first visited Sandringham as a grandchild of George V and that her grandchildren now visited her there.

The Queen was surrounded by almost her entire family for Christmas day. The Princess of Wales declined an invitation and spent the day at Althorp, her family home.

The Queen attended church with the Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, Princess Margaret, the Duke of York, Prince Edward, and the Princess Royal, with her husband of two weeks, Cdr Timothy Lawrence, and her children, Peter and Zara Phillips.

The Duchess of York, separated from her husband since March, joined the family for lunch with Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie, allowing the Queen her six grandchildren around her.

Letters, page 13

Text of message, page 14

Cheers and tears

Weekend, page 7

Sons pray for absent princess

By A STAFF REPORTER

FIFTEEN members of the royal family prayed yesterday for the absent Princess of Wales, who spent Christmas with her brother, Earl Spencer, at Althorp.

Prince William and Prince Harry sat with the Prince of Wales in the chancel of the 130-seat Church of St Mary Magdalene at Sandringham as the prayers were offered. Loudspeakers relayed the service to a crowd of 600 outside.

The royal party also included the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, the Princess Royal, her husband, Commander Timothy Lawrence, and their children Zara and Peter, the Duke of York, Prince Edward, Princess Margaret and her children Viscount Linley and Lady Sarah Armstrong-Jones.

The Duchess of York stayed at a farm house near Sandringham with her children, Princess Beatrice, 4, and Princess Eugenie, 2.

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Guinness on prescription as Bart's puts aside closure

By LIN JENKINS

STAFF and patients at St Bartholomew's hospital yesterday celebrated Christmas in traditional manner, trying to contemplate the uncertain future of one of London's oldest hospitals.

For patients well enough to toast the day there was sherry and Guinness on prescription. The rest of the patients, including the terminally ill, received Christmas stockings of fruit and chocolates. Consultants brought their families into work with them to brighten the atmosphere, and one dressed as Santa Claus for those children who were too ill to be sent home for the day.

With just three weeks to go before the health department announces which parts of the Tomlinson report to implement, the campaign to keep Bart's open is well under way.

The report proposes that Bart's merge with the Royal London, closing the site founded in 1123 as a haven for the sick and poor, endowed by Henry VIII and immortalised by Richard Gordon in the *Doctor in the House* books.

Today, the campaign office will reopen after a one-day holiday. Those entering through the Henry VIII gate and crossing the square to the hospital yesterday were constantly reminded of the threat of closure. A banner proclaims "Bart's belongs to London", and urges visitors to write to their MPs to protest at the threatened closure.

Judging by the piles of chocolates boxes and bottles of wine presented by grateful patients and their families to the nurses on the admissions ward, there are many who value the hospital's work. "It is they who ask us what they can do to help, not us who ask," said Polly Mackenzie, a staff nurse on the ward.

New admissions are greeted by a noticeboard covered in newspaper articles about the

proposed closure. "Everybody is happy to sign our petition. This is a local hospital and a much loved one," she said.

The ward had five admissions yesterday morning, including the victim of a stabbing, a patient with a broken jaw, and another with a broken hip. Chris Morland, duty administrator, said staff were expected not to canvass for support against the hospital's closure. "If the approach was made directly it would sound like 'save our jobs' rather than 'save our hospital'."

The hospital, however, commands passionate loyalty. The Duke of Gloucester, its president, made a rare speech in the House of Lords in defence of Bart's. Its patients seem equally committed.

"This is the best hospital in the country," said Rebecca Davis, 83, who has been on the James Gibb ward for six weeks since heart surgery. "It's a most fantastic hospital. The doctors and nurses are the best you could find. Both my son and daughter are working today, so they cannot come to see me. But I'm having a lovely day."

Like 80 per cent of the hospital's patients, Mrs Davis lives within its two-mile radius catchment area. The hospital dismisses criticism that London teaching hospitals attract too much work from outside and should be closed to allow greater emphasis on primary care in the city.

"This is the local hospital and if we close there is nowhere else for them to go," said the duty administrator. "We even get lots of patients who were born here before the maternity unit was moved. We really do have a role in the community."

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Leading article
and letters, page 13**



Doing her rounds: Sister Angela, a doctor in the medical oncology department of Bart's, visits her patients

Happiness is burger and beans in a car park

By TIM JONES

THE men and women who refused to come in from the cold even for a day or two gathered in a bleak car park in west London yesterday to be fed and treated by volunteers from Crisis, the charity for the homeless.

While others who live on the streets enjoyed Christmas at shelters opened specially for the festive season, these were some of the homeless who preferred not to risk leaving their tin and cardboard "bases" for fear of being ousted.

Others simply do not much enjoy the company of others, but all had their reason for shunning the offer of a bed and a hot traditional Christmas lunch provided by Crisis at three huge refuges in London and others in the provinces.

Mike Stratton, who organised the mobile unit in Acton, west London, said: "Because

the number of young homeless is growing, many of the older men keep away from the refuges because they do not enjoy boisterous behaviour and are in any event a bit frightened. They know also that if they leave their bases for a few days someone younger and stronger may move in and they will lose their meagre possessions."

Yesterday at Acton, the homeless were joined by a large family group of gypsies who held an impromptu party in the cold evening air. One lady, surrounded by numerous children, said that on hearing of the mobile unit she had organised a minivan so that they could enjoy the food and facilities. While these were not the people Mr Stratton and other volunteers had planned to cater for, they were not turned away and were given a meal of hamburgers, sausage and beans.

The genuine homeless formed an orderly queue and

waited for their turn to enjoy a little bit of Christmas cheer. Among the facilities, haircuts proved the biggest attraction.

Michael Boyle, an articulate Irishman who thought he was about 40, said his prime purpose in attending was to have a change of clothing. "I sleep in a nearby park and need as many sweaters as I can lay my hands on to keep away the cold. Thank you for saying I am obviously intelligent, but the fact is I am an

alcoholic and am also on drugs."

As though to prove the point, he drank from a bottle of clear liquid and scrambled on the floor for cigarette butts.

His friend, also Irish and equally articulate, said: "I had a family once and I suppose I have a story to tell, but who cares? Drunks is my curse and my comfort and that's just it."

A much older man who was queuing patiently for food and treatment said he preferred to think, but the fact is I am an

take advantage of the mobile unit as it meant he did not have to leave his own sleeping place for long. "I think Crisis does a fantastic job and with their help I get by."

Earlier in the day, the mobile unit had been dispensing food in Deptford, King's Cross and Wapping.

Mr Stratton said it was the first time Crisis had operated mobile units and had discovered through treating hundreds of people that there was

an obvious need for them. Although Crisis expects to offer food, shelter and emergency medical treatment to more than 2,000 people over eight days, officials estimate that 8,000 people nationwide are now sleeping rough. Its annual effort is supported by more than 16,000 volunteers and £1 million in donations.

Adam Woolf, director of Crisis, said: "Across the country, the number of single homeless is now at an all-time high. One of the worst areas is Bristol and there is a growing problem in the North West."

He said there had been an alarming increase in the number of young people with nowhere to sleep. "About one third of the homeless are in their early 20s."

Mr Woolf added: "Homelessness is in the public eye at this time of year but it does not go away. We are working throughout the year."

Diary, page 12

Global call of duty disrupts naval celebrations

By MICHAEL EVANS

DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

CHRISTMAS for the Royal Navy's furthest flung ships and submarines was a mixed bag of celebrations. Some of the crews in hot climates relaxed on port visits, while others on "defence watch" in potentially hostile waters snatched their turkey dinner between shifts.

HMS *Plover*, one of three patrol craft policing around Hong Kong, responded to a mayday call from a sinking Chinese fishing boat. It set off on a 200-mile trip before hearing that the fishermen had been rescued.

For the first time, three ships spent

Christmas in the Adriatic on operational duty. Britain's humanitarian operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the international trade clampdown on the Serbs has added yet another commitment to the navy's responsibilities. Under the government's Options for Change defence cuts, the navy's destroyer/frigate force is to be reduced from about 50 to 40 but, as is the case with the army, the commitments are becoming more varied as the relative stability of the Cold War is replaced by a rise in nationalist conflicts.

The war in Bosnia and the United Nations requirement to monitor and enforce trade sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro has tied up Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels, as well as 2,400 troops. All were to celebrate Christmas, but their duties came first.

HMS *York*, a Type 42 destroyer, is on patrol in the Adriatic, as part of Operation Maritime Guard. Two Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships are at the Croatian port of Split. *Resource* is holding stores for the troops and *Sir Bedivere* has a small hospital on board ready to treat any casualties among the 2,400-man British force assigned to Operation Grapple. Britain's contribution to the UN relief effort in Bosnia.

HMS *Amazon*, a Type 21 frigate, supported by HMS *Dumbarton Castle*, an offshore patrol vessel, and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary *Gold Rover*, are near the Falkland Islands on the patrols that have operated since the conflict with Argentina in 1982. Also in the region are HMS *Herald*, an ocean survey ship, and HMS *Endurance*, the new version of the ice patrol ship.

Two warships and one support vessel are in the Gulf. A Type 21 frigate is on West Indies guard duty. Meanwhile, a Polaris submarine is somewhere in the North Atlantic.

Nationalist demand, page 9

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Churchill letters sale threatens study of Britain's finest hour

By MATTHEW D'ANCONA

FEARS that Winston Churchill's papers are to be split up in the new year have prompted a heated international row about academic access to these precious documents.

The Chartwell papers, which cover the war leader's life up to 1945, are to be sold by the Churchill family trust under its duty to the beneficiaries, raising concern among 20th century historians that the comprehensive 5,000-file archive at Churchill College, Cambridge, will be broken up irrevocably.

Although the college owns only the post-war papers, bequeathed by Lady Spencer-Churchill in 1978, its Churchill Archives Centre has taken responsibility for the conservation, binding and cataloguing of the earlier sources. Correlli Barnett, keeper of the 20-year-old archive centre, said that the integrity of the collection should be preserved. "The ideal solution is that the papers should be awarded to

the college by whoever owns them so that they could be united with the post-1945 papers."

Mr Barnett said that the future of the files, which range from Churchill's schooldays, through his service in India, to his leadership during the second world war, was a matter of national concern. "Churchill was quite the greatest Englishman of this century. Splitting up the letters would be a tragedy," he said.

The Conservative MP Winston Churchill, Churchill's grandson and one of the prospective beneficiaries of a sale, has said that the college, which was founded by his grandmother in 1958, is too poorly endowed and thus ill-equipped to carry out the cataloguing of the documents, allegations denied by its sons.

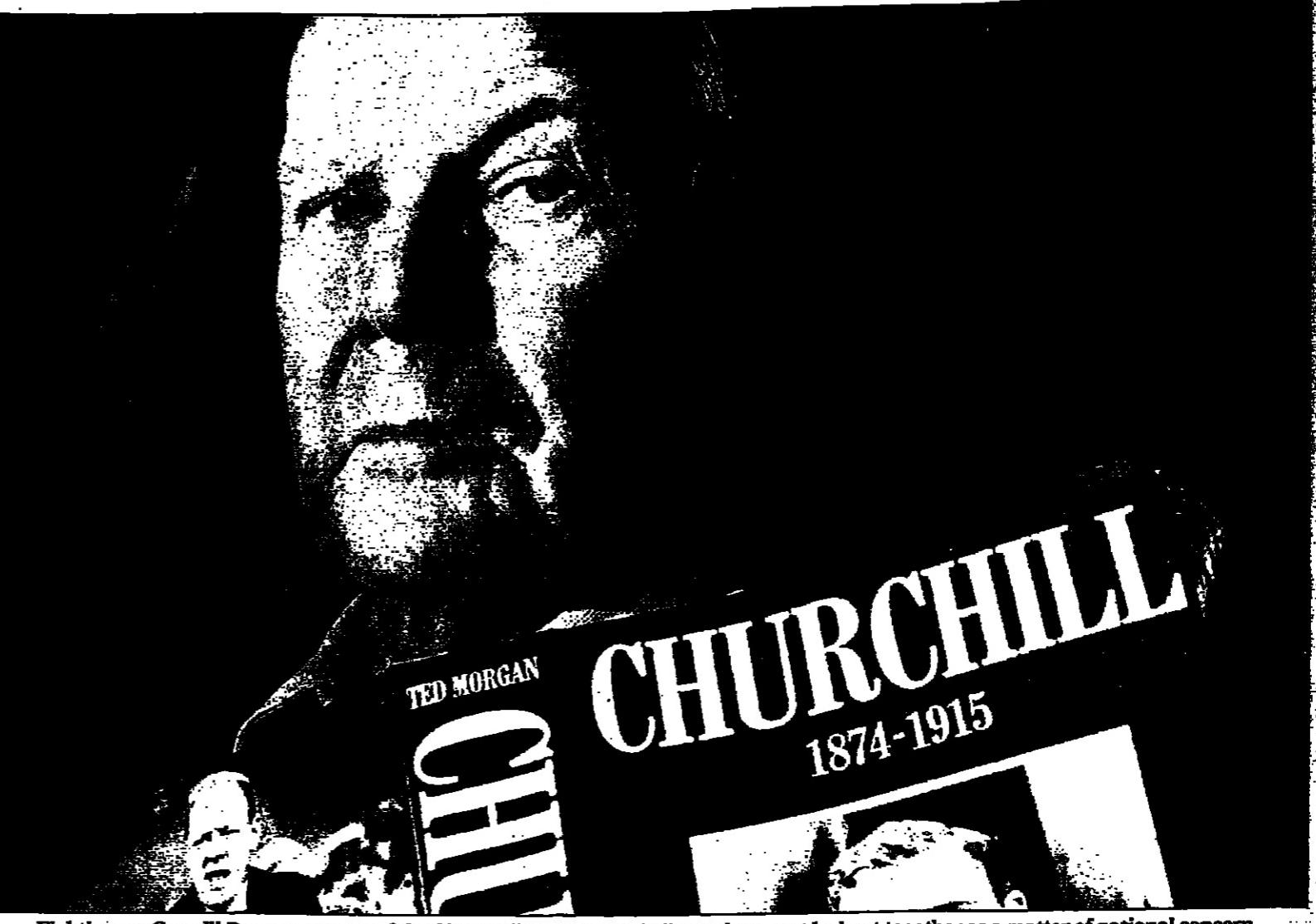
The prospective sale has also rekindled anger among Churchillian scholars about access to the Chartwell papers, generally closed to historians other

than Martin Gilbert, who has written an eight-million word official biography on Churchill.

Paul Addison, author of *Churchill on the Home Front: 1900-55*, said that there was widespread concern among British historians about the restrictions on the papers. "Some specialist writers have been given access but biographers haven't, presumably to preserve the papers' commercial value. It's high time they were opened."

Historians have argued that the trust is not entitled to sell letters and memoranda on Downing Street notepaper.

A ten-year ban was originally to be imposed on the Chartwell papers after the completion of Churchill's official biography, but this is now expected to relax. However, Mr Barnett said that general access could not be permitted without Cabinet Office approval, which was still awaited.



Fighting on: Correlli Barnett, curator of the Chartwell papers, who believes they must be kept together as a matter of national concern

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Universities attack

30% cut in fees for arts students

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

UNIVERSITIES have reacted angrily to the 30 per cent cut in fees they receive for arts students, announced by the government just before Christmas.

Higher fees received for science subjects will remain unchanged to encourage universities to take more students in the government's priority areas. Ministers hope to control the rapid expansion in arts and social sciences by removing the financial incentive to recruit.

The announcement represents a reversal of recent policy and is the latest in a series of attempts to manipulate the higher education market. A decade ago, tuition fees were halved to stop the polytechnics from over-recruiting, but six years later they were doubled to encourage universities to meet expansion targets for higher education.

John Patten, the education secretary, called a halt to the present expansion in last month's Autumn Statement. Although universities were given 13 per cent more money over the next three years, this was to cover the extra students already on courses.

Mr Patten said: "Given the need to strike a balance with the rate of expansion of further education, the government envisages a period of consolidation in higher education after its recent growth beyond the levels projected as recently as May 1991." University budgets assumed that intakes of new students would be held at present levels over the three-year planning period.

The reduction in fees, most of which are paid by the state, is intended to ensure that the

Fish and fowl vie for survival on lakes

By JOHN YOUNG

FISH and fowl are competitors for scarce food and cannot happily co-exist on inland lakes and reservoirs, a new study by the Game Conservancy suggests.

The conclusion is based on a 20-year study funded by the ARC quarrying group and carried out at its wildfowl centre, a former gravel working at Great Linford near Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire.

Dr Nick Giles, author of the report and head of the conservancy's wetlands research, says that flooded gravel pits can become invaluable nature reserves, especially as more of the country's natural wetlands are lost to new drainage schemes. But to attract wildlife, they must be properly managed, which means controlling the freshwater fish population.

As part of the study, about seven tonnes of coarse fish were netted at Great Linford and transferred to other fisheries. The result was a notable increase in the numbers of migratory and overwintering duck and geese.

Dr Giles acknowledges that nature reserves attracting large numbers of Canada geese, which have become permanent settlers and pests

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Siege mentality afflicts emergency services

Doctors treat thousands of police for stress disorders

By CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

A POLICE sergeant is still undergoing treatment in hospital for a stress-related disorder weeks after an incident in Hyde Park which sparked off a terrorist alert. At the time, detectives believed that he had been pistol-whipped after interrupting an IRA operation but subsequent investigations found that was not the case.

The sergeant is one of 3,000 officers in London who will have received either treatment or counselling this year for what is now recognised as a serious and growing problem for the emergency services. Thousands of others have been treated in the provinces.

James Thompson, a senior lecturer in psychology and co-director of the stress clinic at Middlesex Hospital has 600 case files and is developing new methods of therapy for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Currently, about 30 per cent of victims show signs of improvement after eight one-hour sessions and Dr Thompson aims to improve on this. "It was the televising of the Vietnam war which brought pressure for PTSD to be recognised, a new term applied to what is essentially a very old condition."

Besides PTSD, organisations setting up stress counselling schemes are recognising the accumulated effect of stress over long periods. More than 10 per cent of the

■ Members of the emergency services are coolly professional at the scene of traumatic incidents. Their problems begin later

28,000 Metropolitan police officers received such counselling and treatment in the past year. Many go to the Police Convalescent Home at Gorring, Oxfordshire.

One in ten is admitted for stress related disorders but 30 or 40 per cent of patients who attend with some other illness or condition undertake stress counselling while they are there. Lyndon Filer, administrator of the 50-bed hospital, has seen attitudes change markedly. "Five years ago, stress was very difficult to come to terms with for officers

but, now that it is seen as a legitimate medical problem, more and more recognise the need for counselling."

Vera Waters is a stress counsellor who works with both the Lancashire and Greater Manchester police forces. She sees around 20 officers a week. "If you look at assaults prior to 10 or 12 years ago they were almost solely about fighting but now you have attacks on police with a variety of weapons."

"In the last 12 months, I have counselled officers who have been attacked with iron

bars, bricks, all sorts of weapons. Often you have a situation where more than one person will actually lie in wait for an officer. Ten years ago you didn't get that." She said:

"The officers don't feel there is any justice. I find that officers who are attacked from behind, in other words who do not see their assailant at all, often find it far more difficult. There is nothing to anchor the memory on. If you've grappled with someone, if there has been hand-to-hand contact or a face seen, the healing processes are much easier."

She believes officers feel a much greater sense of siege than they once did. "If ten years ago, you had a helicopter looking on to a town and you saw an officer being struck to the ground and you could see six or seven people running towards him, you might be reassured and know that he was getting help," she said. "If you were in that helicopter today and looked down, you would have to allow for the fact that, probably, at least 50 per cent of the people running towards him would be going to assist in the attack."

Dr Doug Duckworth is a psychologist who works with officers from the West Yorkshire force. He became involved with the police service after treating officers who had dealt with the 1985 Bradford fire, in which 56 people died.

He said use of the service was rising as more police officers realised that what was said in the sessions remained confidential. "People who have used the service realise that it is no big deal. They are all problems that normal people can have and there are straightforward solutions."

The impact of the Hillsborough disaster, when more than 90 football supporters were crushed to death at the Sheffield Wednesday stadium, was "massively worse" than the effects of the Bradford City fire.

"Whereas police came out of Bradford smelling of roses, after Hillsborough everyone pointed the fingers at the police, quite unjustifiably in many, many cases. I can think of one police woman who put her life on the line and worked to exhaustion, doing things that were heroic in her own way, as people had done at the Bradford fire. But next day in a shop she was called a 'murdering bastard'. She is no longer a policewoman."



Alan Matthews: "We were there first"

Unseen victims of bomb blast

By JENNY KNIGHT

THE two heroic ambulance men who treated scores of victims at the Baltic Exchange in London after the biggest IRA bomb on mainland Britain are both still receiving psychiatric treatment eight months later.

They have suffered nightmares and flashbacks. One is in a secure mental unit after trying to commit suicide when charged with murdering his girl friend, and the other lost his home and went bankrupt after spending a month in a mental hospital following a breakdown. He is now being treated as an out-patient for post-traumatic stress.

The men's unions say they are the most remarkable examples among hundreds of other ambulance crews who

have not been given proper help after being caught up in bombings, disasters and accidents. The London Ambulance Service is to set up a stress counselling team in April, three years after the Advisory, Consultation, and Arbitration Service recommended setting up divisional clinics, telephone helplines and home visits.

Trevor Thomas and Alan Matthews were driving past the Old Bailey when they felt the blast of the Baltic Exchange 100lb bomb, which killed three people. They arrived on the scene three minutes later and were acclaimed as heroes after staying all night treating many of the 91 injured. Trevor Thomas, 48, said he could not sleep for

three days after the incident, the face of a woman who died in the blast burnt in his mind. Five months after the bombing, he was charged with murdering his girl friend, nursing sister Sue Oliver, at their home in Barking, east London. He is now in Hackney Hospital after attempting suicide in Pentonville Prison.

Alan Matthews, 28, who was admitted to East Ham Memorial Hospital after the incident, said: "The Baltic Exchange was traumatic. We were there first and it seemed an eternity before any backup arrived. It was only later that I thought about the danger. I think the (ambulance) service has let us down because they don't seem to recognise the problems of stress."

'I couldn't even make a cup of tea'

A MARRIED woman detective constable, with 13 years in the force, told the West Yorkshire psychologist Doug Duckworth that her problems began after three years in a child abuse unit. She is now back on full-time duty (Christopher Elliott writes).

"In March I was absolutely desperate. I really thought I was going mad. There is a terrific amount of burnout on these child abuse units. I ended up unable to do anything, I couldn't even make a cup of tea. The maximum time on the unit should be 18 months but I wanted to stay on and give some kind of continuity."

"The overtime was incredible. Every referral takes at least five to six hours initially. Sometimes getting the story from the suspect is ten times more difficult than getting it from the victim, as the suspect is so often overcome with self-revulsion. You

come out feeling absolutely shattered. Having been in the unit, I was a bit more sympathetic to clinical psychologists than most. I originally went to my GP and she was going to send me to my community welfare and I thought, 'This is crazy, when our own force had this man [Dr Duckworth] to see. I don't know how I would have kept it going without him.'

"There is a much higher proportion of people going out with 'back aches' who really have other problems. They go to see the GP and tell them, 'I can't have stress on my certificate, I'd rather have exhaustion'. I was very worried that when I went back I would have a difficult time, that I would lose my credibility. But I discovered that it was an unfounded fear."

A uniformed officer, now back on light duties, saw his problems begin when prisons decanted their inmates into police cells. As well as working increased overtime, he was caring for a sick relative. "The prison officers said they would only look after the establishment number and the rest had to be looked after in police cells. All officers were told they must work on their days off. This caused problems over two years."

"My wife and daughter were coming at the back of the queue. She talked of divorce. I had several sessions with Dr Duckworth and, at the end of four, my wife saw him. Now I don't think that I could get wound up any more."

"The pressure was so much that I came in and you just go, go, go and you think you just get on with it. I hate violence, but I ended up going out on the street hoping it was going to happen. I thought, 'What right have these people to be happy?'

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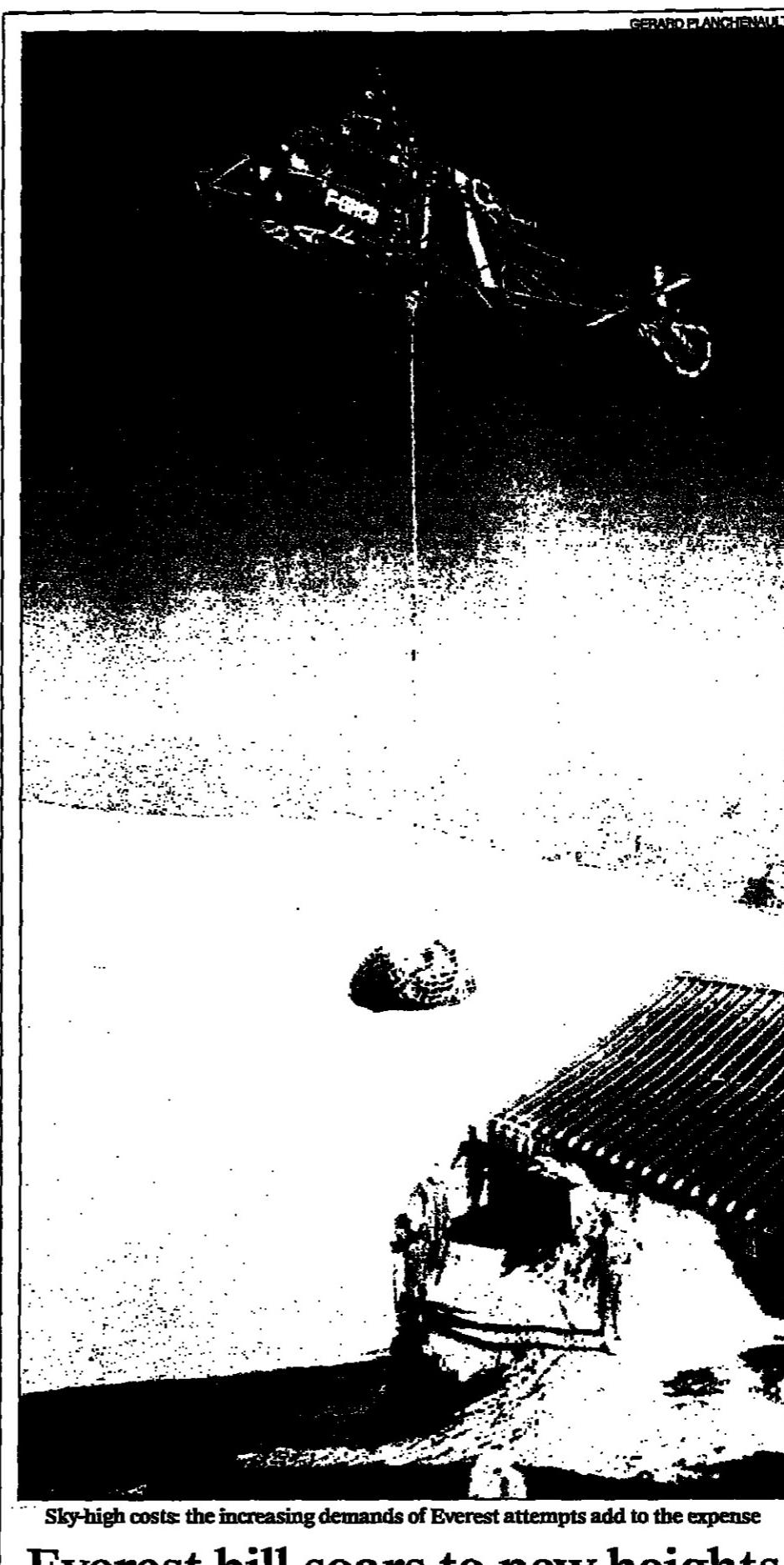
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Pair found dead in caravan

A man found dead in a caravan beside the body of his mother cut his own throat, police said yesterday. His mother suffocated as a result of pressure applied to her neck.

The pair, believed to be 70 and 30, were found on Thursday after police received reports that the woman had not been seen for several days at the caravan park in Upchurch, Kent, where she lived. Post-mortem examinations showed that the man died of self-inflicted cuts to the neck.

Kent police said that no other person was being sought in connection with the deaths.

Council cuts 2,000 jobs

More than 2,000 workers are to be made redundant by Derbyshire County Council, which announced the news on Christmas eve. Education will be the hardest hit with more than 1,000 jobs, including teachers', being lost.

The council must cut its budget by £37 million next year to meet government spending limits. Bob Jones, chairman of the personnel committee, said he hoped that the cuts could be achieved through early retirement and voluntary redundancies.

Donor appeal

St Pancras church in Chichester, West Sussex, will be turned into a medical clinic for the day on January 6 in an attempt to find a bone marrow donor for James Crook, 17, a member of the congregation, who has leukaemia.

Tanker crashes

Police frogmen were called in after an oil tanker crashed into the river Kennet in Wiltshire, endangering millions of fish at a nearby trout hatchery. The tanker was raised safely after eight hours. No one was hurt.

Couple gassed

The bodies of Barry Skinner, 19, and his girlfriend, Debbie Conroy, 17, both of Glenrothes, Fife, were found in a car in Mr Skinner's lock-up garage. They had been overcome by fumes.

Master's voice

Clive Budgen, of Fairford, Gloucestershire, coaxed his dog into the arms of a rescuer who held a walkie-talkie and let him reassure the jack russell after it fell 40ft down a cliff near Ilfracombe, Devon.

Damp squib

Isle of Wight councillors have cancelled plans to light beacons on New Year's eve to mark the single European market due to lack of interest.

Everest bill soars to new heights

By RONALD FAUX

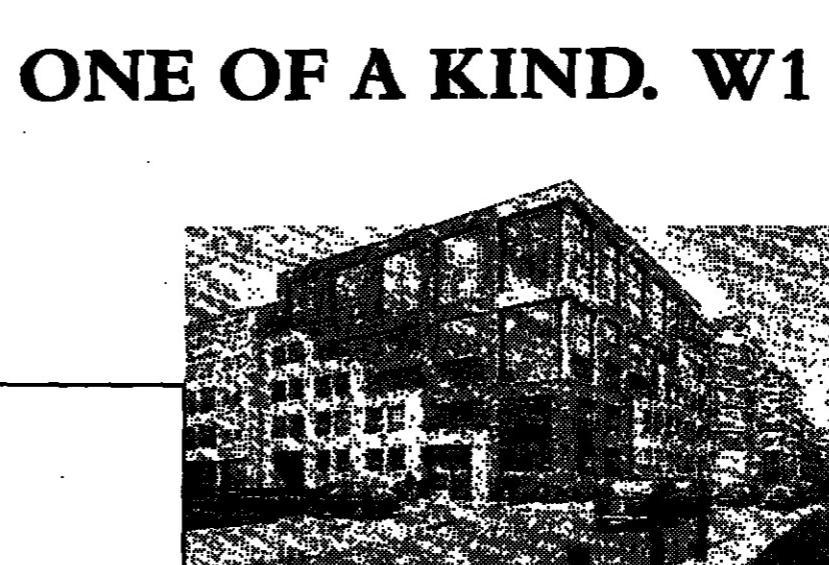
EVEREST has been hit by inflation. Soaring fees for climbing the peak have put the highest summit on earth in a year. Roger Payne, the council's national officer, said: "The Nepalese say they are increasing the fee to protect the mountain environment. But the more expensive the expedition becomes the bigger it becomes and the more funding is required from sponsors who want to see a result for their money."

A British expedition led by

Lord Hunt was the first to conquer the 29,028ft peak in 1953. The expedition cost about £17,000, of which £10,000 was supplied by The Times.

Chris Bonington, who climbed Everest when he was 50, understood the Nepalese attitude. "It is a poor country. What is important is that they think of the longer term and plough back some of the fees into a proper infrastructure for tourism."

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ST. GEORGE

Jails chief attacks inadequate facilities after first visits

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

MANY of the facilities in jails in England and Wales are inadequate, forcing staff to work at an immense disadvantage, the next head of the prison service said after stepping inside a jail for the first time.

Derek Lewis, who admitted that until four days ago his knowledge of prison life came from the media and the BBC comedy programme *Porridge*, said that during his visit to Brixton prison he had been surprised at the range of activities taking place on such a small site.

Mr Lewis yesterday left his wife and two young daughters at home to sample Christmas inside when he visited Pentonville prison, north London, as part of a survey of his 128-property estate. He has already been to Brixton and Aylesbury prisons, and today travels to Whitemoor prison in March, Cambridgeshire. "I have an awful lot of listening to do and a lot of learning to do," Mr Lewis said.

In his first interview since his appointment was announced, Mr Lewis told *The*

Times that though conditions in many jails were far from ideal, his ambition was to improve standards so that people from around the world came to England and Wales to see how prisons should be run. He wanted to improve regimes, physical conditions and prison security.

Mr Lewis, the first outsider to be appointed to head the service, said after visiting Brixton that, though he had been prepared for the physical look of the buildings, he had not expected the range of

activities taking place within its Victorian walls.

He had been surprised to find a microcosm of society, with staff running a substantial hospital, educational facilities and a big catering operation. "The throughput of people really quite stretched my mind," Mr Lewis said.

Praising the staff for the way they worked on an incredibly congested site, he added: "It does speak to me very strongly about the inadequacy of a lot of the physical facilities that must exist elsewhere. The people who are trying to operate in Brixton and similar jails are under an immense disadvantage with those facilities."

Mr Lewis, who takes over on a £125,000-a-year salary next month, held senior management positions with Ford of Europe, the Imperial Group and Granada.

He turned down the first approach from a headhunting firm to consider the prison job, but was then persuaded to review his position. Until the approach, Mr Lewis said he had not thought a great deal about the successes or failures

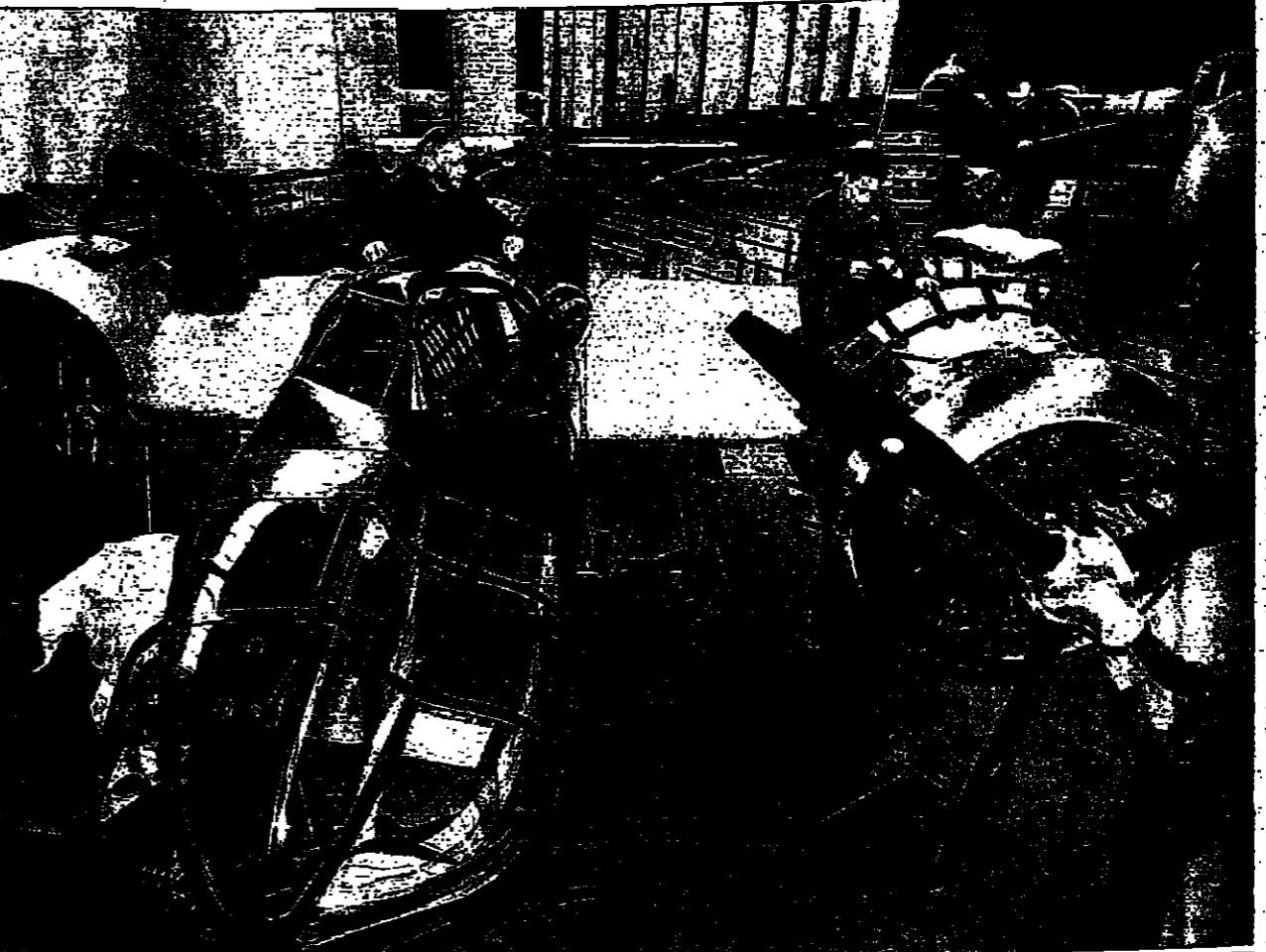
of the criminal justice system or prisons.

A lover of Donizetti and Bellini *bel canto* opera, a keen cyclist and hill walker, the new chief executive will push ahead with the service's strategy of giving greater powers to prison governors to manage their own jails. But, he said, there would be no shake-up for its own sake. Organisations such as the prison service, with 36,000 staff, 42,200 inmates and a £1.6 billion annual budget, were best run by allowing individuals to organise their own units within broad objectives and guidelines, he said. He had been impressed by the way management and staff at Brixton had taken responsibility for their destiny.

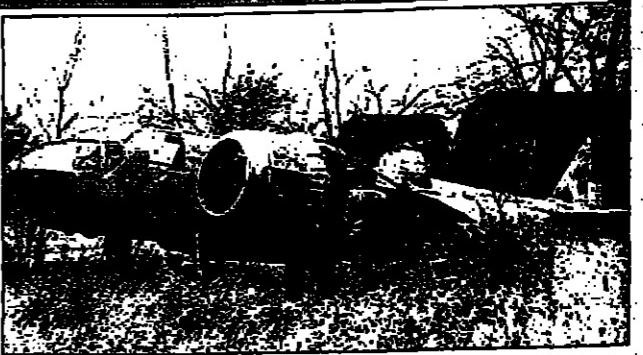
With the government keen to inject private sector management skills into the prison service, Mr Lewis signalled his enthusiasm for greater outside involvement. "The private sector has got an important role to play because there are skills, resources and ideas available, all of which ought to be harnessed to help achieve our goals," he said.



Lewis: "Private sector has important role"



Last of the few restoration work on the world's only remaining Blenheim bomber is directed by Graham Warner, a former RAF pilot. Right, as the aircraft was found, abandoned in Canada. It will be ready to fly in the spring, after five years' work by ten volunteers at the British Aerial Museum at RAF Duxford, Cambridgeshire.



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Iran-Contra pardons put Bush's place in history at risk

FROM JAMIE DETTMER
IN WASHINGTON

TWO years ago George Bush drew a line in the sand in the Gulf and accomplished the greatest achievement of his administration. On Christmas eve the president sought to draw another line, this time in an attempt to halt in their tracks domestic enemies intent on ensnaring him in the Contra affair.

His pardoning of Casper Weinberger, the former defence secretary, and five other aides to Ronald Reagan and intelligence directors has probably ended any chances of further prosecutions being mounted in connection with the affair.

Judging by the storm of protest that has greeted the pardons, Mr Bush has gambled with his place in history. He hopes to be remembered as the man who freed Kuwait and alleviated suffering in Somalia. Some commentators suggested last night that by granting the pardons he will be recalled as the president who, in effect, pardoned himself from wrongdoing.

Within hours of Mr Bush's announcement, Lawrence Walsh, the independent Iran-Contra prosecutor, spoke darkly and menacingly of presidential misconduct.

Speaking on television, Mr Walsh gave a warning that he was now going to focus on Mr Bush's alleged role in the Iran-Contra affair and he revealed for the first time that, like Mr Weinberger, Mr Bush appeared to have withheld notes on some meetings about selling arms to Tehran that he attended when vice-president.

It is unlikely that Mr Walsh, who has laboured for 61 months to no avail in his efforts to secure Iran-Contra convictions that would stick against senior Reagan aides, will be able to get Mr Bush into a courtroom.

His attempts to retaliate against the pardons will continue to haunt the president when he leaves office and add to the unease about Mr Bush's decision to grant pardons.

Since the election it has been on the cards that the president would seek to use his unrestricted pardon powers to protect Mr Weinberger, before

■ The prosecutor in the Iran-Contra affair will now focus on the president's role



Clinton: criticised
Mr Bush's pardons

Contras and became increasingly concerned about the plight of American hostages in Lebanon, caution in the administration was thrown to the wind. With Mr Reagan's blessing, Robert McFarlane, the national security adviser, and his aide, Colonel Oliver North, with CIA help commenced shipping arms, mainly Hawk and Tom missiles, to Iran in February 1985. The shipments ended in October 1986.

The Contra part of the affair started when at meeting in London some American officials realised that they had \$750,000 (about £500,000) left over from one transaction. Colonel North, according to one official present, quipped: "Let's use it to support the Contras."

Some aides in the administration gave a warning of the dangers, foremost among them Mr Weinberger and George Shultz, the then Secretary of State. According to one Weinberger note, the vice-president, Mr Bush, was not opposed to the deals. Mr Bush has always insisted that he did not know about the Iran-

Contra affair and that he was kept out of the "power loop".

After congressional investigation and the long and expensive Welsh enquiry, three main questions remain to be answered about the affair. Did President Reagan know exactly what his officials were up to? What did Mr Bush know and how much was he involved in the plotting of the policy? Has Mr Bush been involved in what Mr Walsh calls the "disturbing pattern of deception and obstruction that permeated the highest levels of the Reagan and Bush administrations"? The Weinberger pardon has in effect vastly limited anyone's ability in getting answers to those questions.

Bill Clinton led the critics of Mr Bush's pardons. They have also provoked a series of other questions that will darken the final days of the Bush administration and lead to a debate about the power of the executive branch of government in America. Already politicians and lawyers were asking yesterday what sanctions are available to Congress when it is thwarted by the executive in discovering the truth behind presidential actions.

Presidential pardon, page 1
Leading article, page 13



Off the hook: Casper Weinberger, the former American defence secretary, answers reporters' questions after his pardon and that of five others for their alleged involvement in the Iran-Contra affair

Clinton completes balanced cabinet

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

BILL Clinton, the US president-elect, completed the most diverse cabinet in American history on Christmas eve, including the appointment of more women, a fourth black and a second Hispanic.

Mr Clinton selected Zoe Baird, 40, the general counsel of the Aetna life insurance company, to be America's first female attorney-general. Mickey Kantor, 53, his old friend and campaign manager, was appointed to the post of US trade representative.

After some late juggling of contenders and jobs, Bruce

Babbitt, the former governor of Arizona and 1988 presidential candidate, was appointed interior secretary, delighting environmentalists and confirming the cabinet's strong "green" bent. Mr Clinton further pleased environmentalists by naming John Gibbons, director of the congressional Office of Technology Assessment, to be his chief science adviser.

Mike Espy, 39, a black congressman from Mississippi, is to be agriculture secretary. Federico Pena, 45, Denver's Hispanic mayor, was made transportation secretary.

Mr Clinton has also spanned the Democratic party's ideological fault lines and balanced experienced Washington insiders, especially in the top economic and foreign affairs posts, with bold new thinkers culled from the country's universities and state governments. The appointees "represent the best in America", said Mr Clinton.

The trade representative's appointment was eagerly awaited abroad, but Mr Kantor has no track record that would label him a free-trader or protectionist. The Los Angeles lawyer, who is known as a formidable negotiator, will have the responsibility of completing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and North American free trade accords and of defusing growing trade frictions with Japan and Europe, but he has no experience in this field. Once tipped as the next White House chief of staff, he appears to have been given the job almost as a consolation prize.

Ms Baird's appointment was also a surprise, though Mr Clinton was known to be seeking a woman to head the justice department. She is little known outside legal circles and has only the sunniest record of public service. But she has risen rapidly in the private sector to become the first female general counsel of a big US corporation.

She has a reputation for getting things done, and is expected radically to restructure a department that has become the powerhouse of Republican attempts to promote conservative legal and social programmes. Mr Clinton called her "a dynamic, talented and innovative lawyer... tough, tenacious and gifted".

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On patrol in Somalia

Americans go hunting for elusive 'bad guys'

FROM SAM KILEY IN BAIDERA

CORPORAL Sonny and his mate Terry, having evaded their officers while on patrol, sat in the shade of an acacia bush and ripped open the heavy flak jackets which have reduced the fast-deploying US Marines to desiccated turtles under the intense Somali sun.

"All I want is a cold beer," sighed Sonny, who arrived in Mogadishu, the Somali capital, two weeks ago. On Christmas day in Baidera the most aggressive act that he encountered came from a goat which, unimpressed by his M16 rifle and grenade launcher, munched the grass beside a wadi the young marine was patrolling.

Terry tucked into cold tuna and noodles spiced with tabasco from a miniature bottle, which he was holding in a plastic bag. "Some Christmas," he said. "Can you make hamburgers out of camel?"

The American forces in Somalia are on a dry operation, so there was no chance of beer. As the United States and

other countries had sent soldiers to relieve famine and bring peace to the violent anarchy which is modern-day Somalia, and because some of the armed Somalis have yet to accept fully that the looting party is over, soldiers had been instructed that Christmas festivities would be postponed.

"I guess it's a good idea. We don't want to annoy the locals," said Terry.

The young "grunts" said they were happy to be involved in Operation Restore Hope. "But where have all the bad guys gone?" The "bad guys", they had been told, were the gunmen of the four-wheel drive battlewagons, generally teenagers high on *khat*, a drug which resembles privet, who have reduced the country to a mass of starvation and shattered buildings.

About 30 people die each day as a result of their activities in Baidera, once a prosperous city on the Juba river, which along with other towns in the central Bay region fed most of

Somalia. But the looting gangs — in Baidera they are members of the Marehan clan of the deposed dictator Mohamed Siad Barre — had fled into the bush.

"The US is not famous for staying on and finishing the job properly," said Sonny. "I sure hope they don't pull us out before we have this place under control. I don't want to go home [to California] and see on the TV that the place has disintegrated again." This is the overwhelming attitude of the American soldiers, who are unhappy to have been sent to Somalia because it is uncomfortable, but anxious to put an end to the suffering they have seen.

The men who may be able to point Sonny, Terry and their colleagues towards the "bad guys" — the US State Department and the CIA — suffered their first casualties on the day before Christmas eve, when one of their vehicles, out on a mine-hunting operation ahead of the marines'

arrival in Baidera, hit an anti-tank mine not far from where Sonny and Terry were sitting. The vehicle was sent spinning into the air and somersaulted three times. One was killed, three injured. "This is an active hostile area, so we expected something like that, but it still hurts," said Harry,

who had malaria and so had not gone with them.

The special forces men dress like photographers except that their multipocket vests are stuffed with guns and radio equipment. They are unmistakable, lean and fit and they did not celebrate Christmas either. Their job has been to

snoop around towns, such as Baidera, Baidera, Kisimayu and Mogadishu, ahead of the marines and to identify stash-
es of weapons and heavy
artillery and the heads of the looting gangs still in the area.

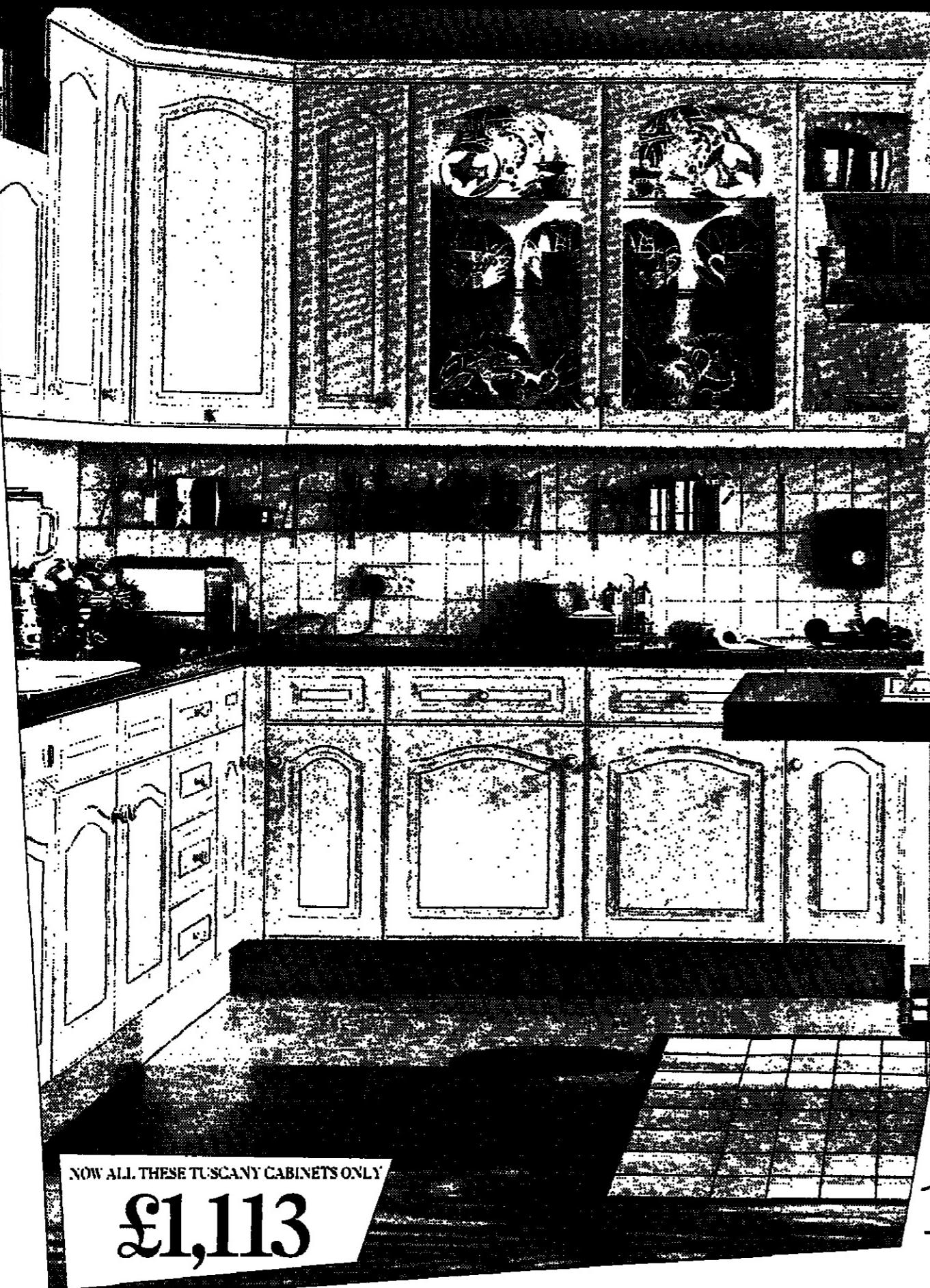
"We know they are around. We know where some of their stuff has been hidden," said

Fred. "It's a pity that our timing was a bit off, or we could have swept into some compound and delivered a very unpleasant present from Santa. But we'll have to wait a few days."

■ Nairobi: The United Nations said it has had to cut back mercy flights of food for

starving Somalis because of fuel shortage in Kenya. Arthur Holdbrook, director of operations for the UN's World Food Programme in Mogadishu, said yesterday that for the past three days mercy flights had been reduced by three a day from an average of 14 because of shortages. (Reuters)

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Mines fail to stop marines taking sixth famine town

FROM REID MILLER IN MOGADISHU

AMERICAN Marines and French Foreign Legionnaires secured Oddur shortly after dawn yesterday, a Christmas day prize in a race to wrest Somalia's aid distribution centre from bandits.

The town was the sixth to come under the control of the American-led military coalition. The day before, 750 marines took Baidera, about 200 miles west of Mogadishu. The 350 Legionnaires and 250 marines took Oddur's dirt airstrip and swept through the town of about 30,000. As in each previous deployment, not a shot was fired.

Marine Chief Warrant Officer Eric Carlson, briefing reporters in Mogadishu, said the French-American team reported finding an estimated 5,000 anti-tank and anti-personnel mines on roads and paths around the town.

"Their main task today is to get a handle on the mine situation and clear the airport" for the resumption of food flights, the officer said. He said no mines were found on the airstrip or main roads. Mines were strewn across Somalia as part of the clan fighting that broke out after Mohamed Siad Barre, the dictator, was overthrown.

The first American casualty of the humanitarian mission was named last night as Lawrence N. Freedman, 51. He was killed when an American vehicle hit an anti-tank mine. With only two more towns left on the multinational task force's list of targets, UN officials were drafting plans to take over the job of moving food to the starving and rehabinating the shattered nation. No timetable has been set for the changeover in command from the US to the UN, diplomats at UN headquarters in New York said, but

Washington wants it done as soon as possible.

Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN secretary-general, who has urged the Americans to stay longer and play a greater role in Somalia, met Lawrence Eagleburger, the US Secretary of State, on Wednesday to discuss the shift. Diplomats who attended a security council briefing by the secretary-general said the exchange of command is likely to be gradual, with UN peacekeepers



Boutros Ghali: seeks greater American role

moving into areas where roving brigands have been subdued. Marrack Goulding, the under-secretary-general in charge of peacekeeping, and his UN staff of 22 were consulting local military officials on the transition.

President Bush, who will visit Somalia on New Year's eve, has expressed the hope that American troops could be coming home by the time Bill Clinton takes office on January 20. More than 18,000 American servicemen and women are in Somalia, either ashore or on board ships just off the coast. (AP)

Letters, page 13

Veteran of struggle to end apartheid dies

FROM MICHAEL HAMLYN IN JOHANNESBURG

HELEN Joseph, the British-born anti-apartheid campaigner who carried on undaunted despite suffering a series of banning orders, being acquitted of treason and becoming the first person in South Africa subjected to house arrest, died yesterday in hospital here. She was 87.

Mrs Joseph was born in Midhurst, West Sussex, and educated at a convent and King's College, London. After teaching in India, she moved to South Africa as a teacher in 1931. She did not become politically active until 1953.

She helped found the Congress of Democrats and the Federation of South African Women. After taking a leading role in anti-pass law demonstrations, she was arrested and charged with treason in 1956. She was acquitted five years later.

She received her first banning order in 1957. From 1962 to 1971 she was under house arrest. Each time her restrictions were eased she took up her campaign against apartheid. She was banned again for two years in 1980. Each Christmas day, when

ever her restrictions allowed, friends gathered at her house at midday to drink a toast to apartheid's victims. Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu called on her on their first Christmas day out of jail.

This year at midday her friends gathered (at another house) and drank the toast — but Mrs Joseph had been taken to hospital with a stroke ten days earlier.

Obituary, page 15

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Nationalist leader demands creation of greater Serbia

FROM TIM JUDAH AND DESSA TREVISON IN BELGRADE

VOJISLAV Seselj, the extreme Serb nationalist leader, has said that the re-election of Slobodan Milosevic, the president of Serbia, should pave the way for the legal creation of greater Serbia. Mr Seselj was setting out his demands for joining the Serbian Socialists in a coalition government.

Mr Seselj is seeking the recognition of the two self-proclaimed Serb republics in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina which would pave the way for their political union with Serbia proper. "Yugoslavia will recognise the independence of the Serb republic [in Bosnia] and the Serb republic of Krajina, which will then join Yugoslavia as federal units," he said.

Mr Seselj was speaking in Belgrade as a new exodus of thousands of Muslims fled northern Bosnia and an advance guard of Canadian United Nations troops pulled out of the area, saying that local Serbs were determined to finish the "ethnic cleansing" of the area unhindered.

In the Croatian town of Novska, police reported a wave of Muslim refugees from

northern Bosnia. They said that 5,000 people had fled the area of Banja Luka, Prijedor, Sanski Most and Dubica in two days.

The victory of Mr Milosevic and Mr Seselj and the fear of some form of foreign military intervention appear to have spurred the authorities in the northern Bosnian Serb capital of Banja Luka to persist with hardline policies. The 45 Canadian UN troops who had been stationed there pulled out on Thursday, saying that there had been no agreement over the deployment of the 900 troops that were to have followed them.

Lieutenant General Slobodan Nambiar, the commander of all UN forces in former Yugoslavia, said yesterday that military intervention in the Bosnian war would only cost more lives. Thousands of UN soldiers have been deployed as peacekeepers in Bosnia to keep Sarajevo airport open for relief flights and to escort land convoys bearing food and medicine to Bosnian civilians. General Nambiar said that the UN troops' and their humanitarian mission would

be endangered by international military intervention.

In Serbia, the main opposition coalition, Depos, has been stunned at being pushed into third place by Mr Seselj's Serbian Radical party, which it insists is fascist. His party militia have been accused of taking part in the massacre of more than 3,000 Muslims in Brcko, northern Bosnia, last spring.

Serb nationalists have consistently said that their ultimate aim was a "Union of Serbian States" which would include Serbia, Montenegro, and the two self-proclaimed republics in Bosnia and Croatia. However, the previous government of Mr Milosevic balked at proposing the recognition of these two units. However, should the rump Yugoslav state recognise them, there is a provision in its constitution for their accession to what would in effect be greater Serbia.

Mr Milosevic's Socialist party won 47 seats in the federal parliament, with 33 for the Radicals and a mere 21 for Depos. The results for the Serbian parliament followed the same proportions. Mr Milosevic will probably have to enter a coalition with the Radicals, although Mr Seselj has said that if the Socialists fail to form a federal government, President Cosic of Yugoslavia will be forced to ask him to form a cabinet.

Mr Seselj wants the expulsion of about one million ethnic Albanians from southern Serbia and the deportation of Croats still in Serbia. He dismissed allegations of electoral fraud and said Milan Panic, the Yugoslav prime minister and defeated Serbian presidential candidate, would face prosecution if he remained in Serbia.

The Serbian electoral commission has rejected Mr Panic's demand that the elections be annulled on the ground of fraud, but its Yugoslav counterpart has said that new polls will be held at 190 polling stations, less than 2 per cent of the total.

With the troops, page I
Weekend, page I

Pope pleads cause of peace in Bosnia

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE Pope, in his traditional *Urbi et Orbi* Christmas message, yesterday made a thinly veiled appeal for the siege of Sarajevo to end, describing the peoples of Bosnia as "hostages of planned and inhuman violence".

Speaking from the main balcony in St Peter's Square, the Pope recalled that next month he will be meeting European church leaders at Assisi to hold special prayers for peace in Europe. The pontiff urged those "who brandish violent and murderous arms" to "listen to the voice of love".

The thoughts of Christians go out to people "for whom Christmas this year is marked

by fear, sadness and pain", the Roman Catholic leader told a crowd of pilgrims huddled under umbrellas. "I am thinking of the children of Sarajevo, of Banja Luka, of the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the hostages of planned and inhuman violence."

The expulsion of some 400 Palestinians from Israel also angered the Pope. "How can we not be concerned at the climate of hate and hostility which in the holy land, the place sanctified by the birth of the divine peacemaker, is still exercising its heavy influence and driving still further away the hopes aroused by the peacemaking process begun in Madrid?"



Season of hope: a Bosnian girl praying during a midnight Mass attended by 500 local Croatian Catholics at Kalvarija chapel, near the British base at Vitez

Macedonia ready to seal border

FROM REUTER IN SKOPJE

MACEDONIA will close its border with the southern Serbian province of Kosovo if trouble breaks out among the ethnic Albanian population there, Ljubomir Frckovski, the republic's interior minister, was reported as saying.

"We cannot support anyone and we cannot allow ourselves to interfere in somebody else's

conflict," he told *Nova Makedonija*, the Skopje daily.

Macedonia is due to sign an agreement with the United Nations for the deployment of UN protection forces along its borders with Serbia and Albania to stop potential ethnic violence between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo from spilling over. They would in-

clude 700 soldiers, 35 military observers, ten civilian observers, 26 civilian police and 50 administrative personnel.

Mr Frckovski said Macedonia was preparing refugee camps for an expected influx in case of fighting. "The government would afterwards transfer the refugees outside Macedonia," he said.

The drivers, most of them unemployed before they took this job, are some of the few people who cross the devastated no man's land between the Serb and Bosnian forces in unarmoured vehicles.

More than a couple of the drivers have had the cabs of their lorries pierced by sniper fire.

Ukrainian armoured per-

sonnel carriers escort the convoys, but they offer little protection from snipers and shrapnel — the biggest killers in the former Olympic city.

Mr Ketteringham misses being with his family on Christmas day, particularly since it is his son Ben's sixth birthday. "They're up, and by now Ben should be wrecking everyone's ankles with his new remote-control car," Mr Ketteringham, said looking at his watch. His children are proud of him, he says. He gives them reports of what is happening for them to tell their class. A few weeks ago the class took up a collection for clothing to send to Sarajevo. "They're not worried because they're not aware of the dangers that are here. My wife is, but to them I'm just doing a job."

Mr Ketteringham was driv-



ing a lorry from England to Morocco when a friend told him about a job driving aid trucks to Sarajevo. He said he just wanted to do something a little different. "I just heard about it, went for the job, and here I am today," he said. It was a quiet day in Sarajevo, but sniper fire could still be heard not too far away and there were still a couple of mortar rounds to be heard.

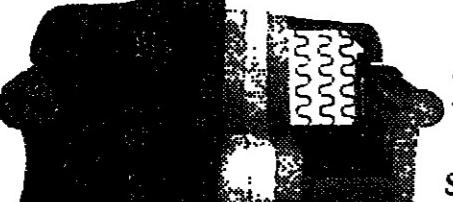
"When you see Sarajevo it makes a mockery of peace to all men." He said the situation was different, but the danger was very much like the four months he spent in Belfast in 1981.

Mr Ketteringham says he knew almost nothing about Sarajevo before he took the job two months ago. "I knew the Olympics had been here and that's it. Basically it was just another war on television. You never realise who was fighting who."

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Exiles in icy no man's land disappointed over Arab states' failure to abandon peace talks

Palestinians left to shiver in snowstorm without aid

FROM PETER SMERDON
IN MARI AZ-ZAHOUR, LEBANON

PALESTINIAN deportees, stranded in an icy south Lebanon no man's land, shivered through a night of snow.

More than 400 Palestinians, expelled by Israel last week, dried their clothes and mattresses in the open yesterday. They said they were preparing for another snowstorm amid shortages of food, medicine and heating fuel.

Israel and Lebanon are blocking Red Cross food shipments to the men, each government saying that the other is responsible for their well-being. "Last night none of us felt warm. We were so cold, we could not sleep," Dr Aziz Dwaik said. "My legs are still frozen," he added, jumping up and down to keep warm.

Some deportees wandered the snow-covered rocky hills around their makeshift tent camp looking for sticks to light fires. Others sat in a sudden burst of sunshine reading the Koran. They held Friday prayers in the slush.

Shaikh Hamed al-Bitawi, who leads prayers at Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque, called on Arab delegations to abandon the Middle East talks because Israel "does not understand the language of peace but understands only the language of the sword".

■ The Red Cross is still waiting for the end of bans on food and medicine for deportees



The deportees, who are accused by Israel of being members of Muslim fundamentalist groups that have staged a series of attacks on soldiers and policemen, issued a statement wishing Christians around the world a merry Christmas.

They complained that they were having to drink water from a dirty stream after their supplies of clean water had run out. "Our biggest problem is water," Dr Omar Farwane said. "We can't boil it because we ran out of kerosene. We don't know what we can do."

The Israeli cabinet, meeting in a special session yesterday, voted to reject a request from the International Committee of the Red Cross to allow

humanitarian aid through Israel's self-proclaimed security zone in south Lebanon. Earlier Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister, who has declared that the expulsion orders were "not subject to change", had described the Red Cross request as "very peculiar". On Wednesday the Red Cross asked Israel to supply the Palestinians with food, medicine and water. It had assembled an aid convoy ready to move to the camp.

Dr Dwaik, who like other deportees was keeping up with the latest radio news, had said that if Israel allowed aid through it would mean that Israel acknowledged that it was fully responsible for the deportees. "If Israel refuses, there is nothing we can do but to carry on suffering until God decides our future and finds a solution, or our souls will go hungry, thirsty and cold to their creator," Dr Dwaik said.

Lebanon, which says it will not allow Israel to use its territory as a dumping ground for Palestinians from the Israeli-occupied territories, on Monday barred relief agencies from sending the men aid from its side.

Zuheir Abdullah, a United Nations information officer, said: "Everything is very difficult and harsh here. They have shortages in medicine, they drink dirty water that they can't boil and half of their heaters are not working. But strangely enough their morale is still high."

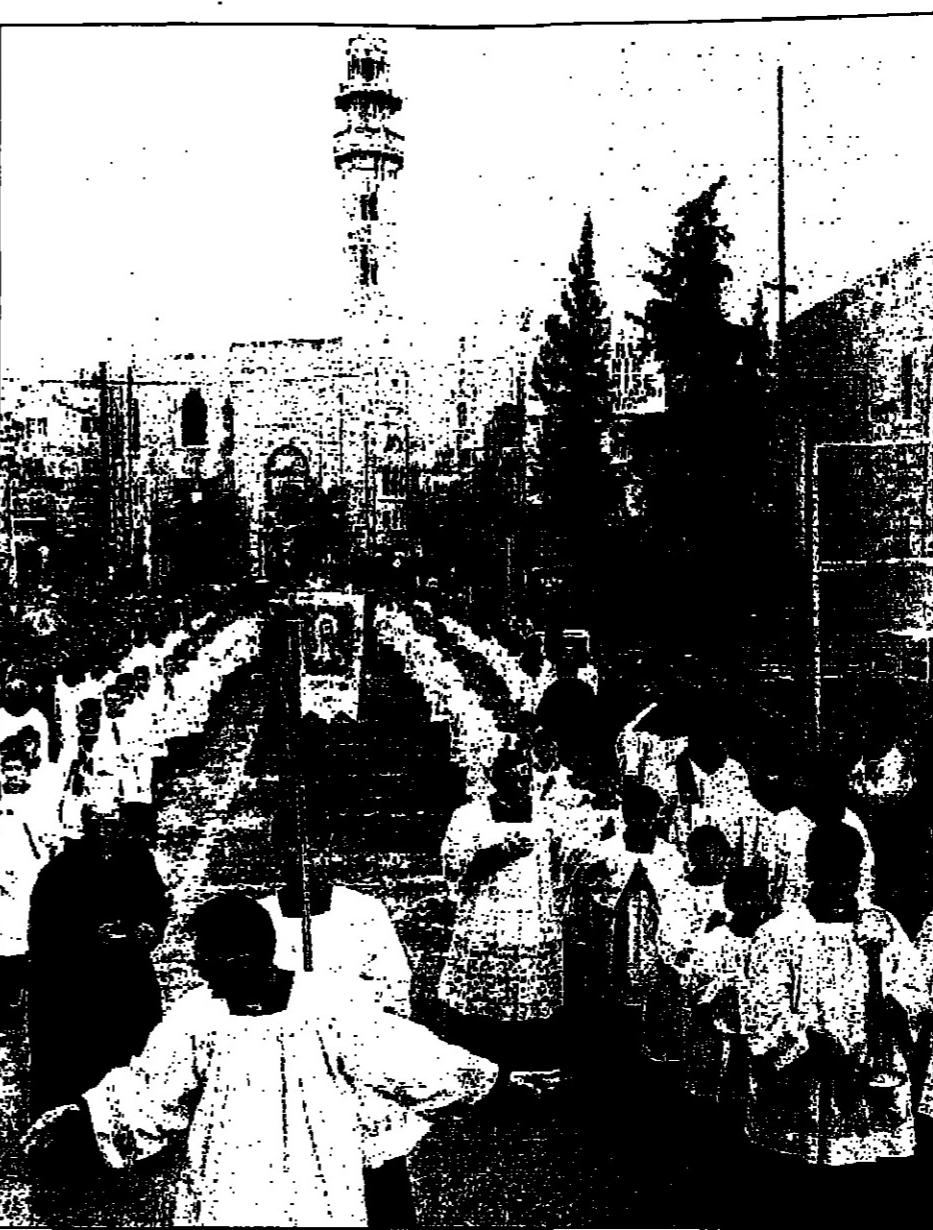
The Palestinians staged a dawn-to-dusk hunger strike on Thursday to pressure Israel into allowing humanitarian aid to reach them and to save food. They said they might fast again today.

The Palestinians were disappointed that the Arab countries participating in the peace talks, who met on Thursday, had failed to withdraw from Arab-Israeli negotiations.

The foreign ministers of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan ended their meeting in Cairo by saying the Arabs would take the issue back to the United Nations and ask the security council to set a deadline for the Palestinians' return home. The deportees said in a statement: "We urge the Arabs to stop immediately and withdraw completely from the peace negotiations."

Dr Dwaik commented: "We hoped it [the meeting] would give stronger results... It put the ball back in the security council's court." (Reuters)

Israeli ban on aid, page 1



Troubled tradition: a Christian procession passes through Manger Square in Bethlehem. Security was tight after the deportation of 415 Muslims

Soldiers outnumber pilgrims

FROM REUTER
IN BETHLEHEM

SHOPS were shuttered, the weather was miserable and the people glutted. For another year, the joy of Christmas in a town under military occupation was a casualty of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Israel's expulsion of 415 Palestinians to south Lebanon wrecked what Christians in the traditional birthplace of Christ hoped would be the happiest holiday in five years of Palestinian revolt against Israeli rule. "The expulsion of the Palestinians has created an atmosphere of sadness, gloom, anger and frustration. People are being hurt," Elias Freij, Bethlehem's Palestinian mayor, said.

Israeli soldiers and policemen outnumbered pilgrims and worshippers in Manger Square cordoned off as part of annual security rituals against possible Palestinian demonstrations. Visitors passed through some police metal detectors.

Bethlehem officials said security was more intense than in previous years. The army placed three Palestinian refugee camps near the town under curfew. Only a few restaurants and shops were open and they were largely deserted. A handful of people listened to an Israeli police band play some festive tunes.

Language of Jesus lingers on in land Islam conquered

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN MAALOULA

At the heart of a linguistic mystery which continues to puzzle the experts, the 18,000 inhabitants of Maaloula and two nearby Syrian mountain villages, Bakhaa and Joubadeen, continue to converse in Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus.

This Christmas, as their forefathers have done for thousands of years, they saluted one another with the seasonal greeting "Aithel melote ebreck". They are believed to be the only people still using the ancient tongue.

"It is truly amazing," said Father Faiez Frejje, the grey-bearded senior clergyman at the local Greek Catholic church built soon after Constantine the Great ended the official persecution of Christianity in 313. "When you see a baby being spoken to in Aramaic, you are immediately

transported back to what it must have been like when the baby Jesus was addressed by Mary."

The priest was dispensing robust local wine to early morning visitors to the St Sergius convent, where he lives, and enthralling pilgrims and scholars who had flocked to the village, 35 miles north of Damascus, by playing them a tape of the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic.

The villagers use it in their homes; but they only speak it, they do not read or write it," he said. "But in recent years, Aramaic has been undergoing a renaissance. A local professor has put together a book of Aramaic words translated into Arabic, with which it has many similarities."

A professor from Trento University, in northern Italy, stood entranced by the curious-sounding words on the tape, perched on a stone shelf in the 2,000-year-old monastery. "It is very emotional to actually hear the language of Christ," he said.

Aramaic is a western Semitic language which was once the official tongue of the Persian empire. It remained in wide use for a few centuries after Christ's death before dying out when the Arabs conquered the region and spread the new faith of Islam.

"The mystery is why Aramaic is still spoken in just these three villages [Maaloula, Bakhaa and Joubadeen] and not, for instance, in another less than a mile down the road," Fr Frejje said, dispensing more wine in tiny silver cups. "The best theory is that the people here were transplanted from somewhere else and were determined to maintain their traditions."

The spectacular geography of Maaloula provides another explanation. Its houses virtually hang from the side of sheer, rose-coloured cliffs and is reached only by way of a narrow winding road. The remoteness combined with the timeless scenes of donkeys staggering under loads of wood add to the biblical quality of the village, whose name means "entrance".

"We are all very proud to speak the same language that Christ himself spoke. At home and in the street, we use it all the time, it has a wonderful sound," said Fassis Kubaa, 20, a shop assistant.

As part of the Aramaic revival encouraged by an increased flow of foreign language students, some of the shops contain tapes of local songs in Aramaic.

Today's villagers seem determined to keep the language alive, despite the trappings of the 20th century. "As long as we have our firesides at which to teach each other, Aramaic will not be allowed to die," said Michael Abu Georges, who sells Aramaic cassettes.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gorbachev speaks of his regret

Moscow: Mikhail Gorbachev regrets the demise of the Soviet Union but says it is "impossible to bring back the USSR", according to an interview published yesterday, the first anniversary of his resignation. The former Soviet leader attacked President Yeltsin, saying he failed to come up with new ideas and put politics above the national interest.

Still popular abroad, Mr Gorbachev, 61, is distanced at home. In his interview with the daily newspaper *Trud*, he spoke of those who deserted him after he resigned. (AP)

Marchers held

Delhi: About 2,000 Hindus were arrested in Faizabad when they tried to march to a temple erected on the rubble of the mosque in Ayodhya. The marchers demanded that Hindus be permitted to pray there. (AP)

Tamils killed

Colombo: Seventy-two soldiers and Tamil guerrillas were killed in a fierce gunbattle in Sri Lanka's Eastern province when an army convoy returning to camp was attacked by about 250 men.

Present time

Paris: Two hundred homeless men, women and children invaded the luxury Georges V hotel in central Paris and distributed gifts. (AP)

Degrees under

Ankara: A drowsy hospital patient swallowed a thermometer that he thought was medicine. Surgeons later removed it. (Reuters)

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Chernomyrdin picks liberal to command pro-market strategy

FROM ANNE McELVOY IN MOSCOW

VIKTOR Chernomyrdin, the Russian prime minister, has appointed a liberal minister to head economic policy in an attempt to prove to his critics his commitment to the pro-market restructuring of the economy.

Boris Fyodorov, a surprise choice, was finance minister before the collapse of the Soviet Union, a co-author of one of the earliest reform packages who resigned after accusing the government of President Gorbachev of slipping back into command methods of economic control.

His elevation to the position of overall control of strategy is seen as a sign that Mr Chernomyrdin, a moderate conservative, is prepared to entertain radical figures in the heart of his government, but it remains difficult to see how he intends to reconcile his own cautious line on reform with the cabinet.

The liberal *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* summarised the doubts about the efficacy of the hybrid cabinet: "The reform potential of this government is doubtful because the minds of the head of government and his key ministers are set differently." Mr Fyodorov said that he would make the control of inflation his priority and that he intended to continue the

polices begun during the past year. "Market-oriented relations will ultimately help our country out of a difficult situation," he said yesterday.

These envisage that the state will no longer support enterprises which cannot withstand competition." Mr Chernomyrdin, after his first cabinet

Moscow, Russia aims to conclude the talks on a second strategic arms reduction treaty in the new year and has offered America a summit on January 2 and 3 in Sochi to sign the deal.

It would eliminate land-based multiple warhead missiles and cut stockpiles of warheads. Lawrence Eagleburger, US Secretary of State, will meet Andrei Kozyrev, Russia's foreign minister, tomorrow.

meeting, emphasised the need for reform "taking into account the social factor".

The prime minister's appointments reflect the desire of President Yeltsin to keep the inner core of his original team together, even if the vicissitudes of the Congress of People's Deputies last week resulted in the loss of Mr Gaidar. If, as the pessimists

Letters, page 13

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Pit protest: Albanian miners at Bulqiza, northeast of Tirana, on the third day of a hunger strike demanding a 75 per cent pay rise. They earn about £23 a month

Moscow children dazzled by West's toyland trinkets

BY ANNE McELVOY

The two little girls in front of a locked glass case hopped from one buckle-shod foot to another in a state of frenzied excitement as the Barbie dolls of their choice were removed and wrapped. Other Russian children watched enviously, allowed a peek at hard-currency goods by their parents on the strict understanding that this was looking, not buying, territory.

At the counter, the girls' father proudly scrolled off 20 one-dollar notes from a wad. The other parents yanked at their children's arms and hauled them back to the more affordable delights of rouble toys.

Detski Mir (Children's World), said to be the largest toyshop in the world, on Moscow's Lubynskaya Square, reflects the chasm between rich and poor which has opened in this, the first year of the free market. For the very well off, there are Ninja Turtles and model Porsches, although the number of buyers on the hard-currency floor remains small.

One of the most notable changes of the past year is the availability of goods for local currency. Many electronic goods and dolls are fakes copies of Western brands made in China and sold here for roubles — albeit more roubles than the average Russian, watching inflation of 35 per cent eat away salaries and savings, can muster.

At the approach of the new year festival — the main Russian holiday — there can be few Moscow children unaware of the difference that dollars make. The *Dyed Moroz*, or Father Frost figures, who trudge around Russian schools distributing parental presents on St Nicholas' day early in December, often carried two sacks this year — one containing rouble goodies, the other dollar presents.

For those in straitened circumstances, the aisles of *Detski Mir* offer some relief. They are packed with middle-aged and elderly women selling odd items at prices below those in the store: a pair of shoes a grandchild has outgrown; an armful of toys wisely hoarded when prices were lower; or a clutch of clothes bought in the cheaper provinces, or fallen off the back of one of Russia's many ill-secured lorries.

"We cannot get rid of them; there are just too many," said Ludmilla Gavrilova, the store manager. When it got to the point that there were almost as many hawkers as customers she called in the police, but they were soon cowed by the iron will of the matrons who refuse to be driven back on to

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Simon Jenkins investigates the mystery of Vermeer's masterpiece

Who was the guitar player?

I first laid eyes on Vermeer's *Guitar Player* in 1974 when she was convalescing on her stretcher in a humble Kenwood bedroom. She had been stolen three months before by persons unknown and found in St Bartholomew's churchyard in Smithfield. I wondered then if she had welcomed her escape. Had she finally slipped from her frame and dashed through the woods of Hampstead to the great lights of London? Why had her captor despaired of his prize? Having gone to all that trouble, what misery had overwhelmed their relationship?

She is now safely back in captivity on her London hilltop, plucking her guitar and gazing softly into the unknown. She is seldom visited and barely visible. The glass of her cage reflects a cold unfurnished room and the trees of Kenwood swaying outside. She is a poignant prisoner. But who was she? Was she anyone in particular?

The *Guitar Player* is one of London's great masterpieces and one of the most neglected. If little is known about Vermeer, even less is known about this picture. There was once a flurry over whether this or a copy in Philadelphia was authentic. Kenwood was rightly the victor. But nothing, even in the vast Vermeer bibliography, tries to identify the girl herself. Some scholars dismiss Vermeer's women as mere idealisations, human still lifes with whom he can play his games of light and colour. I cannot believe this. Dutch art was always descriptive; it painted what it saw. This girl must be knowable, even in this realm of conjecture. So let us look again at the evidence and have some sport with history.

The *Guitar Player*, like most Vermeers, is undated but stylistically late, about 1671-2. Vermeer stopped painting in 1672 and died in 1675, so this must be one of his last works. He would have been 38 or 39 and facing the collapse of his art dealing business that came with the French war of 1672. For the rest of his life he struggled to rescue his affairs to support his wife, Catharina, and large family. He died in debt when just 43 and Catharina was forced to sue for bankruptcy. Her sad inventory of his belongings is one of the few records of Vermeer's life. It is the principal vineyard in which Vermeer scholars must labour.

Vermeer's apparent conversion to Catholicism to marry Catharina Boëns in 1653 wiped him from most civic records and brought a breach with his own family. We know that he was a well-regarded member of the Delft painters' guild. But only three pictures by Vermeer occur in sales during his life, probably early works. Nor do we know how many of his estimated 40-50 original works were in his studio on his death. He may have had a patron. But it is conceivable that he never sold more than a few works, painting primarily for his own interest.

Vermeer had two known sources of income. One was picture dealing, the other was money from his wife's family. He lived in his mother-in-law's three-storey house in Delft's Catholic ghetto, the "Papists' Corner". We know he received money from his mother-in-law, Maria Thins, and that she became devoted to him. Vermeer named his children after her family, not his own. Whether this made him independent of need to earn money from painting or take in pupils cannot be known. When he was short of money, after 1672, he did not paint more; he stopped altogether.

Here is an artist who professed no master, who never travelled

outside Holland, who founded no school. Only 32 surviving pictures have been positively identified as by him, and tentatively four more. Were he a professional artist, this is an absurdly small output. There are no drawings, notebooks or letters. While he is stylistically of his time and place, he shows little sense of it in his subjects. Not for him the engaging domesticity of de Hooch, the social glamour of Meiss or the vitality of Jan Steen. His context, like his life, was his home.

Vermeer's obscurity and the brilliance of his work have elevated him to the status of an abstract, almost metaphysical, artist. His most effusive admirer, Lawrence Gowling, portrays him as a man apart: "Vermeer is drawn away from his time to express the subtlest and least expressible meanings of humanity... he seems almost not to care, or not even to know, what it is that he is painting." Marcel Proust found Vermeer's work "marked by withdrawal and silence... Passion, suffering and sex were banished from his art." Critic after critic kneels before "this bird of paradise in the farmyard of Dutch painting" and concludes that only the most cerebral of geniuses can have been at work. Small wonder he is so fashionable, the Piero della Francesca of the north, the thinking man's Rembrandt.

The canonisation of Vermeer as mystic has, I believe, distracted attention from the ordinariness of his subject matter, and thus from the identity of his women. So let us return to the house in Delft and Vermeer's marriage to Catharina. Contracted at the age of 21 initially against the wishes of both families, it was clearly a love match. Vermeer had to move to the Jesuit district, deeply offend his Calvinist parents and probably sever many old associations.

But nothing can cut him off so much as his own children. Dutch couples at this time commonly had just two or three. The Catholic Catharina was constantly pregnant. She produced 15 children in their 22 years of marriage, eleven of whom survived. Some historians even suggest that Vermeer's aloof style was an escape from paternity. I cannot see why. Vermeer seems to have been a husband passionately devoted to a beautiful wife, one whom he constantly delighted in using as his model in his artistic experiments.

After his early classical themes, and apart from two landscapes and two male studies, all Vermeer's surviving works feature women. Their identity has been little discussed by critics more concerned with his technique and iconography; so disengaged was his style that surely his models are of no interest. Vermeer may have portrayed some of his women individually — he was indeed interested in experimenting with perspective and often seems to have used a camera obscura. But I still find it implausible that he hired models. If painting was for him a deeply serious hobby, albeit one in which he loved to involve his family, why hire models? The family maid-servant, Tanneke, who once saved the pregnant Catharina from attack from her mad brother, is clearly the model for the maid figures, including the Amsterdam "Milkmaid". A scientific friend was clearly the model for the "Geographer" and the "Astronomer".

Perhaps more to the point, Vermeer's women all look much the same: high forehead, prominent jaw, straight nose, wide-set eyes, often a faint smile. They differ mostly in age and dress. In the earlier pictures, the woman is usually wearing an identical blue and yellow bodice with striped



The Kenwood Guitar Player: was she Vermeer's daughter Elizabeth wearing her mother's old jacket and strumming as he painted?

sleeves. This is not a thrown-on gown, as a model might be required to wear, but plainly a personal garment. In the late-1660s, she changes into Vermeer's familiar yellow satin jacket with white fur trimmings, apparently old-fashioned fancy dress. This jacket appears in no fewer than six pictures.

Catharina is assumed to be the model of the pregnancy pictures: a commercial model was unlikely to pose in such a condition. But there is no facial difference between the pregnant models and the rest, until the young girls of the later pictures. Even scholars who are prepared to accept Catharina for the older subjects — she would have been 40 by the time of the *Guitar Player* — cannot quite accept the younger subjects as his daughters. The scepticism is based largely on the girls' presumed ages. But the Hercule Poirtet of Vermeer research, John Montias, has recently combed the records to produce a Vermeer family tree. Four daughters arrived before the first son, Maria, probably in 1654, Elizabeth in 1657, then Cornelia and Aleydis. The two elder girls would have been in their teens by 1670.

In only two pictures does Vermeer present us with the full face of his subject gazing out of the canvas. Even these obvious portraits are seen by some scholars to be "idealised". Both are of young girls, one in The Hague and one in the Metropolitan in New York. They are extraordinary works and to my mind clearly show a father setting aside his usual genre style to paint his eldest children. The Hague "Girl with a Pearl Earring", believed to date from the mid-

1660s, is the loveliest evocation of a human face. Vermeer emerges from it not as the cold genius of Dutch genre but as one of his era's great humanists. It may lack the sexual engagement missed by Proust, but this is a father's portrayal of a daughter in her early teens. Maria could have been between 11 and 13 at the time and is a plausible candidate for this portrait.

The same face appears to be the demure young girl posing in Vermeer's "The Art of Painting", now in Vienna, and perhaps some years later in the Washington "Girl with a Red Hat". Here we see the young Maria becoming her father's favourite model, at least when Catharina was busy. The second of the two portraits, the "Head of a Girl" in the Metropolitan, is regarded as later and less successful. It remains dramatic and is clearly of a different person from the Hague study. I find it reasonable to conclude that she is the next daughter in line, Elizabeth.

Now let us return to London and the well-known face staring out at us from the two National Gallery musicians on the virginals. Here the model is the same as is portrayed in the late-period "Allegory of Faith" in the Metropolitan. This girl, though mature, is manifestly not Catharina. She is stout, with strong Vermeer eyes, swept-back hair and a fringe of wispy curls. Her clothing is significant. She is identically clad in all three pictures, in a rich blue dress, with white sleeves and pearls round a plump neck. As with Catharina's old black and yellow

dress, this is clearly a personal garment, not an artist's drapery. I believe this is Maria again, now grown up, poised and rather theatrical, wearing her best dress for three of her father's all-too-rare masterpieces.

There is a circumstantial clue to this identification. All the contents of Vermeer's household, including clothes, are listed in Catharina's inventory after his death. I notice that the blue maternity jacket and the famous yellow fur-trimmed jacket are both there. But Maria's "virginals" dress is missing. Maria married in 1674, a year before her father's death and the drawing up of the inventory. She would surely have taken any dress belonging to her (rather than her father's studio) with her to her new home.

So what of our guitarist? She is too young to be Catharina and she does not look at all like Maria in the blue dress. Once again the likely candidate must be Elizabeth. In 1672 she would have been 15-16, fresher-faced, certainly less plump than Maria; not the responsible elder; daughter just two years from marriage but a teenager dreaming of courtship. She does not wear a fashionable dress. She wears her mother's old-fashioned jacket and strums a chord.

The distinctive look of Elizabeth in the *Guitar Player*, those strong dark eyes and high brow are compatible with the Metropolitan's "Head of a Girl". We might also see this face in the Louvre "Lacemaker", with the same hair plait and thick ringlets. ("The Lacemaker" shares with the *Guitar Player* the rare distinction of being in the collection of the Louvre.)

All else about the *Guitar Player* must be deduced from the picture itself. It is an uncharacteristically joyful work. The icons are few. There is a bare room, a table with a shawl and some books on it, and a

richly-framed landscape, possibly a van der Velde from Vermeer's stock-in-trade. There is also the guitar. Music is the one activity we can firmly associate with Vermeer's family life, portrayed in a third of his known output. In most cases the portrayal is curiously mute. The instruments make no music. They are silent witnesses to Vermeer's drama. The player seems to have been interrupted by the artist asked to stop and keep still. No tunes hover in the air of those enclosed rooms. The only playing is of light and shade, of sun and shadow.

Not so the *Guitar Player*. Here for once Vermeer is singing. A tune is dancing from Elizabeth's fingers — albeit one that musicians say is unharmonic. There is animation in the face and body. Whereas normally Vermeer engages our attention by distancing his subject from the viewer behind a curtain or doorway, here he brings her forward but dramatically moves her to one side. The artist alerts and distracts our attention. The sitter's right arm is cut off uncomfortably, almost as if the canvas had been chopped. The right knee beneath the dress is raised and foreshortened, giving a quick rhythm to the composition. Like a baroque painter, Vermeer moves our gaze round the canvas, first to the hand on the guitar, then along the arm to the lighted shoulder, the forehead, her eyes. These eyes are in shadow, dark sparkles on the canvas. They are true Vermeer eyes, alert to the world round them, asking us to guess what they see and for what they are hoping.

This is Vermeer at his most untypical, most mannerist. The paint is applied not in the subtle gradations of his early work, but in patches, the boundaries between yellows, whites and greys sharply defined across the folds in the dress or the curves of the hair. Light undulates across the subject, its source unclear. The window is curtained and the glimpse of day cannot possibly yield the vivid shadow on the girl and the picture behind her head. This is Vermeer as dazzling precursor of Matisse.

My personal Vermeer emerges from this search as no puzzle. He was a contented picture dealer deeply in love with a wife for whom he sacrificed much, and in whose family (until the end) he found security. He was an experimenter, fascinated by the optical innovations of his age. He was not a Rembrandt, a man of towering conceit. He was simply a good artist and connoisseur. His joys were domestic and his hobbies intellectual.

I like to see him in a house crowded with the paraphernalia of infancy, badgering Catharina to put on yellows and blues and come and sit for a few minutes more.

Catharina is everywhere in Vermeer's work, reading letters, weighing pearls, making music with friends. Then comes Maria, the "Girl with the Pearl Earring", draped in blue for "The Art of Painting" and the "Girl in the Red Hat". In her maturity, she is placed silent and severe at the virginals. Finally there is Elizabeth the singer, perhaps her father's favourite, strumming her guitar while he painted, later to console him after Maria had married and when his business was in ruins.

When Vermeer died so suddenly in 1675, Elizabeth must have been as distraught as Catharina. Parting with the *Guitar Player* to pay for bread was surely an agony. We do not know if Catharina ever got it back. But we have it. Elizabeth lives on, singing her lament on the heights of Hampstead. What will become of her? I sometimes think that nobody would notice if, on a winter afternoon, I took her by the hand and walked her out across the Heath, trying not to ask her of the myriad Vermeer mysteries. If ever I do, I promise her a better home than that dark corner of a Smithfield churchyard.

Lamont's finest hour

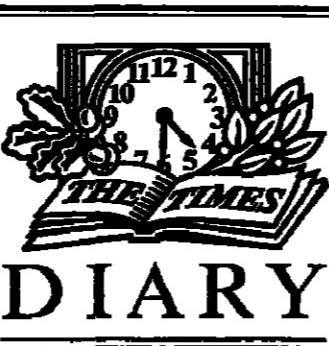
NORMAN Lamont can probably be forgiven, as he enjoys a Christmas break split between Dorneywood and his in-laws in Yorkshire, for looking forward rather than back. But as a pragmatic politician his new year resolutions must be dominated by one item — reviving his popularity. It may help him in this large task to be reminded that Lamontian charisma has not always been in such short supply.

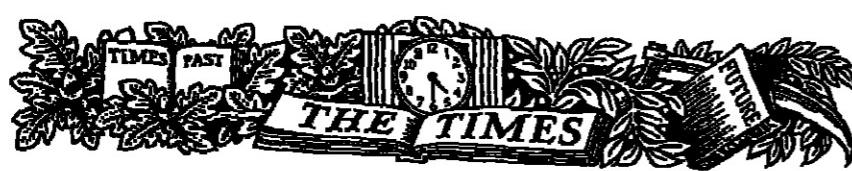
Lamont's old school, Loreto in Musselburgh, near Edinburgh, has uncovered a glowing end-of-term report from Cambridge in 1964. The Cambridge Letter, a regular column in the *Loretian* magazine, waxed lyrical: "Most spectacular, without doubt, has been colourful Norman Lamont of Fitzwilliam college. Norman has been nonchalantly padding the corridors of power in the Conservative Club for sometime now, and friends and admirers were hardly surprised when he was elected president of the union. An excellent president he was too, and like all really powerful men, his influence

did not terminate with his office." (A thought that may or may not comfort the Chancellor today.)

The article was written by Robin Gilmore, now a lecturer at Aberdeen University, at a time when a post-Profunso Tory Party was drifting into electoral oblivion. Gilmore went on to predict with uncanny accuracy: "In view of recent upheavals at Westminster it looks as if this unassuming elder statesman will be more than ever indispensable to a shaken university Tory party. Well informed observers predict a national future for Norman, but with characteristic modesty he laughs it off."

Lamont, who was 22 at the time, displayed even then the coyness towards the media which he shows today. Only after persistent questioning about his future would he hint at a possible appointment at Conservative Central Office. Two years later he was working for the party's research department. But, as Gilmore concluded: "An air of mystery is the essence of Norman's appeal." Like the one that surrounds his economic policy.





A MOMENT FOR MERCY

The lawyers should at last leave Irangate to history's verdict

Every country's constitution has its fault-lines. British republican critics of the delicate, timeworn balance represented by the Queen-in-Parliament may incline to America's executive presidency and guaranteed separation of powers as a more pertinent model for the 21st century. Yet to assume that the tensions between White House and Congress, inherent in America's system since the country's birth, are axiomatically salutary may be altogether too facile.

The solidly democratic principle that no citizen, in whatever office, should be above the law has been put under severe strain in America since Richard Nixon was forced from office after Watergate nearly 20 years ago. A Democratic-dominated Congress has invoked to excess, against Republican presidents, the principle of executive accountability. The White House, barred by legislation from policy decisions it believes to be its constitutional prerogative, has been tempted to resort to deceptions or outright illegality. Hence, in part, Irangate; and hence President Bush's Christmas eve pardon for the former defence secretary, Caspar Weinberger, and five others charged or convicted in this long running scandal.

Mr Bush may not succeed in drawing what might be called the post-Watergate era in America to a close. His pardons will not drop on Washington with the gentleness of rain from heaven. What Republicans depict as an act of unstrained and timely mercy, many Democrats will decry as a self-serving use of his powers by a president whose own role in the saga has never been fully clarified. By seeming to denigrate the Irangate prosecutions as an attempt to "criminalise policy differences", Mr Bush will inflame controversy where he sought to end it. For Lawrence Walsh, the Irangate special prosecutor, his pardons complete a cover-up of wrongdoing by the Reagan administration and confirm that "powerful people with

powerful allies can commit crimes in high office" and lie to Congress with impunity.

Yet Mr Walsh protests too much. His team has spent over five years on the investigation, at a cost of nearly \$35 million. The tardiness of these proceedings and the method of his approach are both open to criticism. All those most intimately involved had already been pardoned, or had their convictions overturned on appeal. Whatever the folly of the Reagan administration's covert sales of weapons to Iran in exchange for the release of American hostages, and the illegality of channelling the proceeds to Nicaragua's Contra rebels, the statute of limitations must be deemed by now not merely legally but even morally in force.

The prosecution of Mr Weinberger has had about it a flavour of the vindictive legalistic. However wrong he may have been to deny the existence of personal notes dealing with Irangate decisions, he was one of the only two members of the Reagan cabinet known to have opposed the Irangate policy. Whoever he may have sought to protect, it was himself. Yet at 75, after a distinguished career of service to America and its allies and when his own judgment on the issue was not in question, he faced up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

Mr Walsh's frustration that Mr Weinberger has been spared trial suggests that the net spread for him was principally intended to catch other foul — including Mr Reagan and Mr Bush himself. Mr Bush has now promised to hand over his own Irangate notes. Even if they show that he was more "in the loop" than he has claimed, little purpose will be served by ferreting through fine legal print to find ways to prosecute him. The verdict on Irangate is now better left to history than to further legal inquisitions. And that verdict may have less to say about Mr Bush, than about the flaws in the rules under which America is governed.

PASS THE CLARET

Official: quite a lot of what you fancy does you good

To the Protestant conscience, pleasure and pain are opposite sides of the same coin. Today many a headache will be blamed on the excesses of yesterday, and accepted as a form of divine retribution. Father, older, and with a insistent ringing in our ears, we shall look forward to the new year with the resolution to eat more healthily and drink much less. No time for mirth, no time for laughter: the cold grey dawn of the morning after. But are the guilty feelings really justified?

Science brings many gloomy messages, but from time to time cheerfulness insists on breaking in. The golfer Harry Vardon, as pre-eminent in the Edwardian era as Nick Faldo is today, once remarked: "Moderation is essential in all things, but I have yet to be beaten by a teetotaller." He never was. Today, gently contemplating the cold turkey and yesterday's empties, we should remind ourselves that food is good for us and that drink in reasonable quantities is an elixir.

We have it on the authority of Sir Richard Doll, no less, that four drinks a day may reduce the incidence of coronary heart disease by half. Total abstainers, and heavy drinkers, are much worse off. A massive study by the American Cancer Society, which followed 277,000 middle-aged men for 12 years, showed that even those who drank six or more drinks a day suffered fewer heart deaths than teetotallers.

True, there are other causes of death, including stroke, cancer, and motoring accidents, which do not show quite the same obliging trends; but heart disease is so dominant that mortality from all causes is lowest in those who drink one unit a day, and only those drinking at least three units a day do worse than total abstainers. This means that half-a-bottle men are actually

doing themselves a favour, and heavier toppers little damage.

And now to food. Few subjects have had more unfriendly publicity than the Western diet, blamed for almost every ill the flesh is heir to. We should note in passing that it is only the well-fed who deprecate their diet; the rest have more important things like hunger, to worry about. Yet even as our diet is condemned by the purists, our life expectancy continues to increase. Heart disease has risen, peaked, and begun to fall while no significant changes have taken place in our consumption of fats, labelled by every proper thinker as the villains of the piece.

The dawning conclusion must be that other factors, including the consumption of fruit and vegetables, are far more important than fat. So long as the turkey is accompanied by vegetables, the Christmas stockings bulge with oranges, and the pudding is full of fruit, there is no real need to repent.

The fuss about food is not a dietary statement, but a political one. In matters of nutrition, we crave what we do not have. Poor societies hold in esteem those that are fat, while the well-fed West sees as its ideal a level of emaciation which is positively unhealthy. Those who are foolish enough to take this ideal seriously may finish with eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia (little known in the 1930s) or yo-yo hopelessly on and off diets that can potentially do them a lot of harm.

The best resolution this Christmas is to practice ignoring a lot of what we have been told. We should be proud to be plump, for the moderately overweight live longer. We should learn to stand up for a traditional diet that has served us well. A slice more turkey? Go on. And pass the claret, for health's sake.

BOXING DAY

Christmas Past: a series on the unchanging face of the season.
Six: From *The Times* of 28 December, 1926

In the winter holiday Christmas Day is the chrysalis, Boxing Day the butterfly. What most people need on Christmas Day is rest, refreshment and peace. They stay at home, and shedding their adult cares and weariness, become children among the children whose special feast it is.

Come Boxing Day the homekeeping chrysallis turns into the gay, roving butterfly. Every one is all agog to leave at home the cold turkey, the cold plum pudding, and to dash into the pleasures of the world. There are dinner parties and dances; there are pantomimes and amusing plays; there is the (more or less) open road for the motor-car; there are sufficient hours of daylight for golf and lawn tennis; there is football to play and to watch; there are popular meets of hounds; there is all the gaiety — queerly enhanced by the dreary look of empty streets and shuttered shops — of a great public play-day.

Boxing Day is the day upon which certain workers, presumably (most of them really) in receipt of adequate wages, go round from house to house asking the patrons of their employers for gratuities. Of these approved mendicants some are but urchins whose rapacious mothers leave them scarce enough of their wages to find them in "cornets" and cigarettes; others are grave and uniformed servants of the State, with moustaches, wives and children.

Let us blame it on the Saturnalia, or some such topsy-turvy nonsense of paganism,

that, during these few unprincipled days of the winter holiday, young and mature, "blind-alley" and ultimately pensionable alike are received and remunerated by their victims with forbearance if not with true good will. For the general credit, let the Christmas good will take its share in these pleasant economic vices.

We like to buy, and we know that we shall get for our little tip more careful service, and the touch of personal interest which makes all the difference between the merely efficient and the specially considerate. It has been rumoured that there are club men unclueable enough to give nothing to the servants' Christmas fund, and to buy with a few secret and shameful coins the personal adherence of sundry members of the staff.

Such as these, and all other extravagant and selfish givers of tips and boxes, spoil the market for the moderate offenders against the economic law, and they should receive no mercy. But until the economic law shall assert that all boxes and tips are pernicious to both parties and must cease, the moderate offender will be content to know that on the whole they do him, as the giver, good. And to some small extent they ensure that for a week or two at least the letter-carrier shall read his name and number right, and the newsman, still half asleep in the cold, dark dawn, shall not leave him with the detestable newspaper so inexplicably liked by his

deplorable neighbour.

Trying times for the royal family

From Sir Kenneth Lewis

Sir, That some of the young members of the royal family have failed to live up to what the country expected of them is obvious. It is also obvious that they are not unique in failing to maintain marriage vows. Nor in an imperfect world can we expect them to be perfect. But we do hope they might try a little harder.

There is one lesson which had better be learned from recent events: the custom of giving the highest honours available to young members of the royal family before they have earned them must not happen in future. Dukes before duchesses when they marry. We must have an end to the creation of young dukes just because of who they are.

We also do not want spare duchesses staying in the headlines making money from tides they have not justified.

Yours faithfully,
KENNETH LEWIS,
Redlands, L Uppington Road,
Preston, Oakham, Rutland.
December 23.

From Mr John Carter

Sir, As MP for the Bay of Islands in the far north of New Zealand I recently called on New Zealanders to express their allegiance and loyalty to the Queen and the royal family and to express their opposition to the constant criticism of the monarchy by the British press. To date I have received many hundreds of letters of support to my call and very few against.

The royal's problems are exacerbated by the sensationalist-hungry press and its constant hounding, especially at this most trying time for the family. My call to you is for you to cease this fourth-estate banting of our Queen and her family.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN CARTER
(MP, Bay of Islands),
Government whips' office,
Parliament House,
Wellington, New Zealand.
December 11.

From Vice-Admiral Sir Louis Le Baily

Sir, Elements of the media are apt, in a derogatory vein, to describe Her Majesty's Household as "courtiers". Sincere though this may be, clearly the intention is to portray wealthy, underworked, bowing and scraping hangers-on, who, the media like to lead a gullible public to imagine, serve the Queen as television shows them serving medieval monarchs.

The household do not need my defence. Nevertheless, knowing some of them when we all served Her Majesty in more remote roles than those they now occupy, I would assert three common attributes besides their total loyalty: absolute integrity, first-class brains and, particularly, the "common touch". The media aim to demean Her Majesty by demeaning those able people who work directly to her.

As Dryden wrote: "Plots, true or false, are necessary things, to raise up commonwealths and ruin kings."

Yours truly,
LOUIS LE BAILEY,
Garlands House, St Tudy,
Bodmin, Cornwall.
December 14.

From Mr R. G. Maling

Sir, The prime minister's generous, if somewhat ingenuous, comment (report, December 22), "The institution of the monarchy... is an essential part of our landscape in this country", offers the prospect of a new Christmas game: classifying the royals in terms of special scientific interest or of outstanding natural beauty.

Yours faithfully,
R. G. MALING,
Windfall, Butlers Cross,
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.
December 22.

From Mr Mark Dodgson

Sir, The element of surprise having been taken out of the nation's Christmas, perhaps some rival tabloid journalist will be so kind as to "scoop" the contents of the editor of *The Sun's* Christmas presents and publish a full list before Christmas Eve next year.

Yours faithfully,
MARK DODGSON,
15 Nevil Road, SW17.
December 23.

From Mrs Molly Hudson

Sir, Juxtaposed at the foot of page 1 in *The Times* on December 18 (earlier editions) were four items:

1. Ruth Gledhill's distressing report on the mental hospital in Pariac, Bolivia.
2. "£1 lottery will make millionaires."
3. Calman's little boy asking Santa Claus: "I'd like a job for my dad."
4. An advertisement for diamond solitaire rings, "available from £600-£15,000".

I wonder how future anthropologists and historians researching 20th-century man would summarise us, were they to read this page.

Yours faithfully,
MOLLY HUDSON,
15 Beverley Road,
Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-732 5000

A helping hand for historic Moscow

From Professor Peter Lansley

Sir, A small band of British architects, engineers and surveyors who, beyond commercial reason, have dedicated time and resources to getting under the skin of Russia, its construction industry and its culture, are ready, willing and able to act on the government's response to Simon Jenkins' call for supporting the restoration of Moscow ("Restoring a capital city", December 19).

However, his understanding of the need for a permanent statement of British support for Russia's economic revolution and his sensitive appreciation of the value which Muscovites place on their history and culture is offset by the British government's determined refusal to entertain construction or physical reconstruction as a vehicle for economic aid.

The British Council apart, aid to the Russian construction industry from the British government is "off limits" and the "know-how" fund of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office resolutely refuses to support the reorientation of senior construction industry managers. So, what hope is there for the grander initiatives?

Restoration work in Moscow would be a visible sign of progress for the common good: that the market economy is not just a free-for-all for the individual. It would signal that the British, who are held in high regard, also value Moscow's heritage and cultural roots. Wouldn't this be good marketing, direct yet subtle, from a country which desperately needs to pursue the remarkable opportunities which are to be found in Russia?

Yours faithfully,
PETER LANSLEY,
University of Reading,
Department of Construction
Management and Engineering,
PO Box 219, Whiteknights,
Reading, Berkshire RG6 2BU.
December 20.

From Mr Mikhail Mandrigin

Sir, As British architects currently working on the refurbishment of historic buildings in Moscow funded by Western developers, we are perhaps the last people to disagree with Simon Jenkins over his refreshing advocacy of Western support for the restoration of the capital of All Russia. But in his enthusiasm he appears to overlook a number of important aspects.

Russia is a great deal more than Moscow alone and the money being committed by the government to aid the development of the Russian economy has to benefit as much of the country as possible. A healthy economy will itself ensure the restoration of the urban fabric.

Perhaps some of the money promised by Britain over the next three years can indeed be used to restore key buildings in Moscow. However, even more good would be done more cost-effectively if British commercial investment in the restoration of Moscow's property was made possible by the

Pavarotti be praised

From Mr Alan Blyth

Sir, I have just listened on Radio 3 to *Don Carlos* from La Scala and Richard Morrison's article ("The pipsqueaks and Pavarotti", December 19) seems all the more appropriate.

Any tenor, let alone one past his 57th birthday, who sings the title role as beautifully and securely as Pavarotti deserved a far better fate than uncouth boozing.

In the past, tenors indeed any singer who was more than 50, would usually have to crave indulgence from an audience. Covent Garden was amazed when the great Zenatello returned to sing Otello when he was 50 in 1926.

The same house raised a glass to Martinelli when he sang Caius in *Turandot* at 52 in the coronation season of 1937. Neither, on "live" recorded evidence of both occasions, was as youthful-sounding or unashamed in tone as Pavarotti at 57.

This phenomenon deserves unequalled praise, not curses.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN BLYTH,
22 Stirling Street,
Lavenham, Suffolk.
December 19.

Heaven and Hell

From Mr J. D. Eastham

Sir, The modern equivalent of Mr Windsor-Aubrey's categories that make up a European Hell (letter, December 16) can mean only one thing — the police, cooks, engineers, lovers and organisers were all British.

Yours sincerely,
DEREK EASTHAM,
Scroggs Cottage,
Partridges Lane, West Row,
Mildenhall, Suffolk.

From Mrs Dorothy Gibson

Sir, Our local guide in Peking this year gave us his Chinese version of Heaven and Hell.

Heaven would be living in an English house, with a Japanese wife, eating Chinese food on an American salary.

Hell would be living in a Japanese house, with an American wife, eating English food on a Chinese salary.

Whatever else changes, the English

government providing export credit guarantee cover.

This would have the benefit of not using taxpayers' money directly, but would cover the political risk for commercial investment. Taxpayers' money would be used only in a few bad-debt cases or if there was a complete reversal to the old state system.

Mr Jenkins also appears to have missed one of the really positive things now happening in Moscow. Without waiting for inward investment or the British taxpayers' money, newly emerging Russian developers and banks are beginning to refurbish and restore old buildings, using their own funds to convert them into offices, residential buildings and hotels. This surely is an encouraging sign of indigenous enterprise and initiative.

Yours faithfully,
MIKHAIL MANDRIGIN,
Mikhail Mandrigin Associates,
27 Eccleston Street, SW1.

From Mr Bruce V. Jones

Sir, Simon Jenkins's proposal of Western aid to restore Moscow's crumbling buildings opens many possibilities for philanthropic ventures.

The Department of Transport could oversee the carriage given to Boris Godunov by the first Queen Elizabeth; the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths' Company could advise on the magnificent English silver collection started by Ivan the Terrible (both in the Kremlin Museum), Oxford University could clean the statue of Timiryazev (Tverskoi Boulevard); having received an honorary doctorate he is depicted wearing their own Rolls-Royce could even aid the refurbishment of the Lenin Museum (Revolution Square) using Lenin's elderly model as a centrepiece display to show alongside their latest marque.



COURT CIRCULAR

SANDRINGHAM
December 25: Divine Service was held in Sandringham Parish Church this morning.

Birthdays

TODAY: Captain George W. Burnet, Lord Lieutenant of Midlothian, 65; Professor C.M. Campbell vice-chancellor, Nottingham University, 48; Mr Patrick Dickinson, poet and playwright, 78; Mr Alastair Dunnett, former chairman, Thomson Scottish Petroleum, 84; Baroness Faithfull, 82; Sir Christopher Hewett, former president, Law Society, 63; Mr Rohan Kanhai, cricketer, 57; Mr Eric Kinder, chairman, Smith and Nephew, 65; Professor Thea King, clarinettist, 67; Miss June Laponine, actress, 48; Mr Denis Quillay, actor, 65.

TOMORROW: Miss Anne Armstrong, American diplomat, 63; Viscount Astor, 41; Sir Gordon Brunton, former president, International Thomson Organisation, 71; Captain N.F. Crump, racehorse trainer, 82; Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Thomas Devitt, shipbroker and former rugby player, 90; Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach, 51; Air Chief Marshal Sir Derek Hodgkinson, 75; The Earl of Inchcape, 75; Viscount Knutsford, 66; Miss Pat Moss, former rally driver, 58; Professor D.H. Northcote, former master, Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, 71; Sir Anthony Pownall, former High Court judge, 87; Professor B.R. Rees, former principal, St David's University College, Lampeter, 73; Sir Norman Reid, former director, Tate Gallery, 77; Dr E.C. Salthouse, master, University College, Durham, 57; Lord Sterling of Plaistow, 58; Miss Janet Street-Porter, broadcaster, 46; the Right Rev A.M.A. Turnbull, Bishop of Rochester, 57; Brigadier Dame Mary Tyrwhitt, former director, WRAC, 89.

Latest wills

Mrs Janette May Porterfield Blaenau, of Richmond, Surrey, former director of the Breast Care and Mastectomy Association, left estate in the UK valued at £221,969 net.

Mr Clifford Frederick Hopkins, of Brixton, Devon, late of Birmingham, left estate valued at £24,190 net. He left personal legacies totalling £1,400, and the residue equally between the Imperial Cancer Research Fund and Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Other estates include (net before tax):

- Mrs Constance Louise Cave, of Terrington St Clements, Norfolk.....£1,072,804.
- Mr Peter Davy, of Truro, Cornwall.....£19,492.
- Mrs Margaret Amalie Dix, of Richmond, Surrey.....£1,084,970.
- Mr Roy Valentine Goodwin, of Coggeshall, Essex.....£509,441.
- Mr William Edward Harford, of Harrogate, North Yorkshire.....£979,705.
- Mr George Johannes Edgar Knight, of Bracklesham Bay, West Sussex.....£586,636.
- Mrs Eileen Deirdre Miller, of Hunsdon, Hertfordshire.....£690,728.
- Mr Oswald Bence Ody, of Kingston Langley, Wilts.....£581,732.
- Mr John Philip Sydney Pearson, of Winchester, Hampshire.....£966,069.
- Mr Douglas Arthur Rossiter, of Monmouth, Gwent.....£775,474.
- Karen Rieserbusch of Chiswick, London W4.....£2,405,251.
- Mr Cyril Shrimpton, of Corfe Mullen, Dorset.....£937,216.
- Rupert Woodhead Williamson, of Oldham, Greater Manchester.....£741,371.
- Mrs Joan Mary Pelman, of Twickenham, northwest London.....£58,049.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Thomas Gray, poet, London, 1716; Lord George Gordon, Protestant agitator, London, 1751; Charles Babbage, pioneer of calculating machines, Totnes, 1792; Dion Boucicault, actor and dramatist, Dublin, 1822; Henry Miller, novelist, New York, 1891; Mao Tse-Tung, Chairman of the People's Republic of China 1949-59; Shaoshan, Hunan province, 1893; Victor Hely-Hutchinson, composer, Cape Town, 1901.

DEATHS: Claude Helvetius, philosopher, Vor, 1771; John Fothergill, physician, London, 1780; John Wilkes, political reformer, London, 1797; Heinrich Schliemann, archaeologist, Naples, 1890; Roger Keyes, Baron Keyes, Admiral of the Fleet, Buckingham, 1945; James Stephens, novelist and poet, London, 1950; Harry S. Truman, 33rd American President 1945-53; Kansas City, 1972; Sir Lennox Berkeley, composer, 1989.

Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radium while experimenting with pitchblende, 1898.

The German battleship *Scharnhorst* was sunk by the Royal Navy, 1943.

BIRTHS: Johannes Kepler, astronomer, Weil der Stadt, Germany, 1571; Sir George Cayley, pioneer of aerodynamics, Scarborough, 1773; Louis Pasteur, chemist and bacteriologist, Dole, France, 1822. **DEATHS:** Pierre de Ronsard, poet, Tours, 1585; George Barrington, pick-pocket and writer, Paramatta, 1804; William Jay, dissenting minister, Bath, 1833; William Armstrong, baron Armstrong, inventor, Northumberland, 1900; William Archer, journalist and dramatic critic, London, 1924; Sergey Yesenin, poet, Leningrad, 1925; Max Beckmann, Expressionist painter, New York, 1950; Lester Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada 1963-68; Nobel Peace laureate 1957, Ottawa, 1972; Houari Boumediene, President of Algeria 1965-78; Algiers, 1978; Hoagy Carmichael, pianist and composer, Palm Springs, California, 1981.

The International Monetary Fund established, Washington, 1945.



Waiting in the wings: The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, assuming an angelic appearance as he is robed at his palace before entering Canterbury Cathedral to deliver his Christmas day sermon. Appropriately, the word angel derives from Greek *angelos*, messenger

The Queen's Christmas message

This year I am speaking to you not from Buckingham Palace, but from Sandringham, where my family gathers every year for Christmas. My great-grandfather, King Edward VII, made Sandringham his country home in 1862 and it was from that house that my grandfather, King George V, and my father used to speak over the radio — originally to the Empire and then to the Commonwealth — on Christmas Day all those years ago.

It was from here that I made my first Christmas broadcast 40 years ago and this year I am very glad to be able to speak to you again from this family home. I first came here for Christmas as a grandchild. Nowadays my grandchildren come here for the same family festival. To me this continuity is a great source of comfort in a world of tension and violence.

The peace and tranquillity of the Norfolk countryside

make me realise how fortunate we are and all the more conscious of the trials and sorrows that so many people are suffering both in this country and around the world. My heart goes out to those whose lives have been blighted by war, terrorism, famine, natural disaster or economic hardship.

Like many other families we have lived through some difficult days this year. The prayers, understanding and sympathy given to us by so many of you, in good times and bad, have lent us great support and encouragement. It has touched me deeply that much of this has come from those of you who have troubles of your own.

As some of you may have heard, I observe, it has indeed, been a sombre year. But Christmas is surely the right moment to put it behind us and find a moment to pray for those, wherever

they are, who are doing their best in all sorts of ways to make things better in 1993. I am thinking especially of the servicemen and women, and the aid workers with them, trying to keep the peace in countries riven by strife and to bring food to the weak and innocent victims. They do not have an easy task and they need all the moral and practical support we can give them.

Curiously enough, it was a sad event which did as much as anything in 1992 to help me put my own worries into perspective. Just before he died, Leonard Cheshire came to see us with his fellow members of the Order of Merit. By then, he was suffering from a long drawn-out and terminal illness. He bore this with all the fortitude and cheerfulness to be expected of a holder of the Victoria Cross.

However, what struck me more forcibly than his physical courage was the fact that he

made no reference to his own illness, but only to his hopes and plans to make life better for others. He embodied the message in those well-known lines: "Kindness is another's trouble, courage is one's own."

One of his Cheshire Homes for people with disabilities is not far from this house. I have visited others all over the Commonwealth and I have seen at first hand the remarkable results of his and his wife's determination to put Christ's teaching to practical effect. Perhaps this stirring example of what a human being can achieve in a lifetime of dedication can inspire in the rest of us a belief in our own capacity to help others.

Such talents and indomitable spirit are not given to all of us. But if we can sometimes lift our eyes from our own problems and focus on those of others, it will be at least a step in the right

direction and Christmas is a good time to take it.

1993 will certainly bring new challenges, but let us resolve to meet it with fresh hope in our hearts. There is no magic formula that will transform sorrow into happiness, intolerance into compassion, or war into peace. But inspiration can change human behaviour. Those like Leonard Cheshire, who devote their lives to others, have that inspiration and they know and we know where to look for help in finding it. That help can be readily given if we only have the faith to ask. I and my family, as we approach a new year, will draw strength from this faith in our commitment to your service in the coming years. I pray that each and every one of you has a happy Christmas and that we can all try to bring that happiness to others. God bless you all.

Queen's faith, page 2

Forthcoming marriages

Mr G.A. Bacon and Miss M.C. Burgess

The engagement is announced between George Bacon, of Bembroke, Isle of Wight, and Melanie, daughter of Mr and Mrs Glubin, Isle of Man, and Julia, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Russell Burgess, of Appleshaw, Hampshire.

Mr R.G.F. Baynham and Miss C.M.J. Medhurst

The engagement is announced between Robin, younger son of Lieutenant-Colonel and Mrs B.C. Baynham, of Whitchurch, Hampshire, and Claire, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs D.H. Medhurst, of Barnet, Hertfordshire.

Mr D.C.P. Blower and Miss J. Khoi

The engagement is announced between Charles, only son of Dr and Mrs A.P. Blower, of Elton, Cambridgeshire, and Jacqueline, third daughter of Mr and Mrs H.C. Khoi, of Singapore.

Mr G.B. Cooper and Miss H.L. Law

The engagement is announced between Giles, son of Mr and Mrs Rupert Cooper, of Edington Priory, Wiltshire, and Helen, daughter of Mr and Mrs Brian Law, of Casteau, Belgium.

Mr M.R. Jordan and Miss W.I.A. Nassi

The engagement is announced between Mark Richard, elder son of Mr and Mrs David Jordan, of Northwood, Middlesex, and Wendy Jane Adele, daughter of Mr and Mrs Keith Nash, of Little Gransden, Cambridgeshire.

Mr J.S. Kilgour and Miss V.A. Kilpatrick

The engagement is announced between John, youngest son of Mrs Elizabeth Kilgour and the late John Kilgour, of Lower Largo, Fife, and Victoria, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs David Kilpatrick, of Kilmuir, Argyll.

Mr D.K. Edwards and Miss J. Rey

The engagement is announced between Nicholas, triplet son of Mr Joe Roeber, of London, NW8.

Mr N. Roether and Miss J. Rey

The engagement is announced between Nicholas, triplet son of Mr Joe Roeber, of London, NW8.

Mr G.S. Ward and Miss D.L. Davis

The engagement is announced between John, only son of Mr and Mrs Peter Tellwright, of Market Drayton, Shropshire, and Caroline, only daughter of Major and Mrs Paul Sugden, of Fordham Hall, Leicestershire.

Mr J.G. Twelwright and Miss C.A. Sedgeman

The engagement is announced between John, only son of Mr and Mrs Peter Tellwright, of Market Drayton, Shropshire, and Caroline, only daughter of Major and Mrs Paul Sugden, of Fordham Hall, Leicestershire.

Mr D.J. Young and Mrs E.H. Ahousa

The engagement is announced between David Richard James, son of the late Wing Commander and Mrs M.J.B. Young, and Elizabeth Honnor, daughter of Mr and Mrs P.R. Boyd James of East Langton, Leicestershire.

Mr D.P.M. Soares and Miss E.H. Howe

The marriage took place on December 19, in the Convent Chapel, Mayfield, Sussex, of Dominic, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Soares, and Emma, daughter of Professor and Mrs Christopher Howe.

Marriages

Mr N.J.A. Edgar and Miss A.J. Ward

The marriage took place on Saturday December 19, at the Chapel of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, of Mr Nicholas Edgar, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Ashley Edgar, of

Mr W. de Winton and Miss E.L. Hughes

The engagement is announced between Walter de Winton, of Maesllyn Castle, Radnorshire, and Linda Hughes, of Beulah, Breconshire.

Mr J.R. Rowberry and Miss N.J.C. Claybourne

The engagement is announced between Nigel, elder son of Mr T.J. Rowberry, of Lutzen, Switzerland, and the late Mrs D.L. Rowberry, and Nicola, only daughter of the late Mr G.R. Claybourne and Mrs V.M. Claybourne, of Humble, Gloucestershire.

Mr J.G. Twelwright

and Miss C.A. Sedgeman

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University news

John Langdon, King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry, London, appointed to Chair of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, and as Head of Department.

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OBITUARIES

TED CROKER

Edgar Alfred "Ted" Croker, secretary of the Football Association from 1973 to 1989, died yesterday aged 68. He was born on February 13, 1924.

ALTHOUGH he was the first professional footballer to hold the job, Ted Croker's reign as the sixth, and in terms of title, the last, secretary of the Football Association will be remembered more for commercial than footballing activities. Croker, indeed, was brought in to the FA because of his business background, and he devoted much of his considerable energy to expanding the Association's income from sponsorship and marketing, with marked success.

The change in emphasis reflected the needs of the time, but it also owed something to internal politics. It is no secret that his predecessor but one, Sir Stanley Rous, had dominated the FA Council to the extent that he had become effectively the most powerful man in English football — and for a time in world football after becoming president of the international federation, FIFA.

The FA councillors were determined that Rous's successors would not be given the same freedom, and Croker was constrained by this. Although he held strong views about football matters, both Sir Harold Thompson and Bert Millichip, the chairman through much of his period at Lancaster Gate, took on more leading roles and adopted higher public profiles than their predecessors.

That was a mixed blessing. It is also true that Croker's judgment, so often acute financially, sometimes let him down on football and political matters. His remark to Mrs Thatcher at the Downing Street post-mortem on the Heysel Stadium disaster, "We don't want your hooligans at our sport," was disastrously misjudged at a time when the prime minister's lack of sympathy for the game was already reaching a danger point. Yet

ironically, as a businessman Croker undoubtedly belonged to the Thatcher wing of the Conservative party, whom he briefly represented in local government.

His touch was not always sure on footballing matters either. He was very conscious of the traditions of the FA Cup, and always stood out against proposals for it to be sponsored. His remarks supporting a breakaway Super League, however, might have made some sense on narrow financial grounds, but they came ill from someone whose first task was to protect the footballing interests of the sport as a whole. As it turned out, he was merely being premature, and it fell to his successor Graham Kelly to lead the subsequent breakaway earlier this year.

The younger of two boys, Croker was born in Kingston upon Thames and had just graduated with distinction from the local technical college when war broke out in 1939. He joined the RAF as soon as he reached 18 and became a flying instructor, surviving an air crash on the Peninsular in 1945.

By this time his brother Peter was playing for Charlton Athletic and Ted followed him to the Valley, playing for the reserves before the air crash which broke both his ankles. Croker showed considerable heroism by crawling down 2000 feet into the valley to get help for his colleagues. After two seasons with the senior amateur side Kingstonian he rejoined Charlton in 1948.

He played eight first team matches in 1950-51 as a makeshift centre-half, but he was recalled to the RAF when the Korean War broke out, and that ended his full-time career. He subsequently spent three years with Headington (now Oxford) United, before another broken leg ended his playing days. He became a qualified FA coach, and went into industry.

In 1960 he set up his own engineering business, inventing a new snow-blower, the Croker Sno-



Bio. He subsequently diversified into machinery for the booming ready-mix concrete industry, before selling out his firm to Liner Concrete Ltd. The sale left him comfortably off and when he saw a Football Association advertisement for the secretaryship to replace Denis Follows, who was retiring, Croker decided the time had come for a change of direction.

He arrived in time to sit on the committee which dismissed the England manager Sir Alf Ramsey, and play a significant part in the choice of his successor, Don Revie, who made his initial approach through Croker. For a time it was a successful partnership, both insisting on raising

FA salaries and fees for staff and players to more realistic levels.

Revie showed as much interest in the commercial side as the secretary, and when Croker recommended the sale of exclusive rights to a kit manufacturer to market the England strip, Revie introduced Admiral, who won the contract. The move subsequently brought a storm of criticism as it was seen as tending towards the exploitation of children, although Croker defended it to the last.

Revie subsequently departed amid some acrimony, but Sir Harold Thompson bore the responsibility for the costly legal battle. Croker had advised against it, but he was more successful in helping guide the FA through the minefield as the Falklands War endangered England's place in the 1982 World Cup. His touch on that occasion was faultless. Hooliganism however proved an intractable problem, and it was to blight the remaining years of his secretaryship.

When the Heysel tragedy occurred, as a member of the UEFA disciplinary committee, Croker was aware of the possibilities, and in concert with Bert Millichip, the new FA chairman, he organised the damage limitation exercise of withdrawing English clubs from European competition immediately. He was however less successful in convincing the government of the need for their support in conquering the problem. A poor relationship with the then minister for sport, Neil McFarlane, which dated back to a disagreement over the England 1982 World Cup marketing symbol, Bulldog Bobby, did not help.

A hip operation and other illness undermined his fitness, and Graham Kelly was brought in as a new role as chief executive in 1988, initially working alongside Croker, who retired in 1989.

He is survived by his wife Kathy, and a son and two daughters.

HELEN JOSEPH

Helen Joseph, veteran white campaigner against apartheid in South Africa, died in hospital in Johannesburg yesterday at the age of 87. She was born in Midhurst, Sussex, in 1905.

FOR four decades Helen Joseph dedicated herself single-mindedly to opposing apartheid in South Africa. She was an inspiration to thousands of young South Africans to whom she spoke directly from university platforms, and to whom her life provided an example of selfless sacrifice.

For her pains she spent 26 years under one form of restraint or other. She was the first South African to suffer house arrest. In 1957 she was charged, along with 151 other people, with treason, and it took four years before she was acquitted. None of this prevented her, whenever she was free to do so, from voicing her outrage at a regime she regarded as racist, undemocratic and wickedly unjust.

Her last banning order expired when she was in her eightieth year. Mrs Joseph not only helped form organisations to carry on the fight against apartheid, such as the Congress of Democrats or the Federation of South African Women, she related directly to the student population, who twice elected her as president of the National Union of South African Students. She also gave direct aid and support to the families of political prisoners or those in exile, establishing structures to support those in need of food and shelter. She was particularly involved in helping Winnie Mandela and her children while Nelson Mandela was locked up on Robben Island.

Helen Joseph read English at London University and, wanting a career as a teacher of English abroad, took her first job in Hyderabad, in 1927. But in 1931 she went to South Africa, the country with which she was to become inextricably linked for the rest of her life.

She first became politically active in 1953 when she joined the anti-apartheid movement. In that year she was closely associated with the African National Congress's civil disobedience campaign against repressive legislation. In 1955 she suddenly shot to national (and international) prominence when, with Bertha Mashaba, the leader of the ANC's Women's League, she mobilised 20,000 women and organised a protest march on Pretoria's Union Buildings, the seat of the South African government.

Bemused officials in this bastion of Afrikaner rule were astonished to see such a gathering of black women led by a white. Indeed they were surprised that the march took place at all as they thought they had sabotaged it by withdrawing the licences for the buses the protesters were to have chartered. They had reckoned without Helen Joseph's determination; contacting township groups, she reorganised the descent on Pretoria, arranging for the protesters to make their way to the city by train and then continue their journey to the seat of government on foot.

It was characteristic of the sheer stubbornness that was to govern her actions over the next 35 years and make her one of the South African government's most obdurate opponents. For her actions she was arrested and charged with treason and only secured her acquittal from the charges in 1961. In the meantime she had received the first of several banning orders that prevented her from attending political meetings and (no less effective) prohibited her from being what she believed to be right. It was to be a repeated feature of her life to be placed under house arrest at regular intervals. Indeed, she said she confessed to some disappointment when President F. W. de Klerk finally lifted restrictions on her in 1990. It implied, she felt, that the government no longer considered her a threat. "I didn't think I'd see this day," she said at the time. "I'm a stubborn old bag and I wasn't expecting things to change."

Unlike Helen Suzman, whose work as a white South African campaigner against apartheid also earned her an international reputation, Helen Joseph's impetus was not simply a liberal or humanitarian one. To the end she remained a militant Marxist-Leninist, like many of her veteran contemporaries in the ANC and in the South African Communist Party. To many the chilling rhetoric of the Stalinist era, to which she often gave vent, seemed out of place in the post-Soviet world. But it had always been the inspiration for her actions and she was too old to change.

She was the author of two books, *If This Be Treason* (1963) and *Tomorrow's Sun* (1966).

Her marriage was dissolved in 1948.

South Africa to be banned and placed under house arrest. For the next nine years she remained confined to her house in a Johannesburg suburb from sunset to sunrise, and was prevented from leaving the city itself. In addition she was ordered to report daily to the police and forbidden to meet more than one person at a time.

The state of being banned, once described by the opposition leader Sir Villiers Graaff as being sentenced to "civil death", put tremendous strains on the physical and mental constitution even of one so tough as Helen Joseph. From noon to 2am were the prescribed hours of reporting to the police and on one occasion when she was late she spent a night in jail. Prevented from receiving a single visitor between the hours of 6.30pm and 6.30am she nevertheless managed to keep herself sane through an iron self-discipline which reflected in such outward signs as a meticulous kept garden. During this time she was not without supporters who were able to articulate a sense of the preposterous nature of the state's persecution of her. As the noted South African liberal lawyer Leo Marquand expressed it in 1967: "What are the crimes that this 62-year-old woman is presumed to have committed — crimes that make the powerful Republic of South Africa regard her as a danger to its very existence?"

As it to add insult to injury, in 1966, Mrs Joseph lost her job with the clothing industry's medical aid society. Her ban prohibited her from entering any building where a trade union met, and there happened to be one on the premises.

Released from house arrest in 1971, she underwent an operation for cancer, but soon resumed her anti-apartheid activities. In 1980 she was banned again for two years, but none of the restrictions placed upon her could repress her unquenchable zeal for what she believed to be right. It was to be a repeated feature of her life to be placed under house arrest at regular intervals. Indeed, she said she confessed to some disappointment when President F. W. de Klerk finally lifted restrictions on her in 1990. It implied, she felt, that the government no longer considered her a threat. "I didn't think I'd see this day," she said at the time. "I'm a stubborn old bag and I wasn't expecting things to change."

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NATHAN MILSTEIN

Nathan Milstein, Russian-born violinist who left his native land to make a career in the West, died in London on December 21 aged 87. He was born at Odessa on December 31, 1904.

NATHAN Milstein was one of the great exponents of the idiosyncratically Russian school of violin playing, in which, at its greatest, as he represented it, a consummate technical command is accompanied by warmth of tone and intensity of style. From the works of Bach — whose unaccompanied violin music found in him one of its greatest modern interpreters — to the late romantic concertos of Dvorak and Glazunov, and the vivid display works of Wieniawski and the emotional reticencies of composers like the middle-period Stravinsky, Milstein's sympathies were unfailingly given to the works he played and the intentions of their composers.

He was born the son of a prosperous Ukrainian wool merchant who nevertheless decided his son should pursue a career in music. Milstein studied at the Imperial Conservatoire, St Petersburg under Leopold Auer, one of the most gifted and influential of

modern violin teachers. His first concert tours of Russia, from 1920 onwards, in which he played with all the principal orchestras and gave sonata recitals with the pianist Vladimir Horowitz, marked him as a violinist of exceptional brilliance.

His first European tour, in 1926, brought a break with the Soviet Union as well as a general endorsement in London and elsewhere of the reputation he had won there. It brought, too, a period of further study with the veteran Eugene Ysaye. From 1929 he made his home in the United States, but after the war he returned regularly to Europe for concert tours, as well as extending his travels into Canada and South America. Indeed, in later years he preferred living in London, feeling that it was less frenetic and more personal than the United States.

If Milstein was, in the warmth and intensity of his playing, fundamentally a romantic violinist, he was at the same time a musician disciplined by his sensitivity to the style of whatever work he played. Intensity of feeling in his performances of 18th century Italian music — for he was obviously devoted to the works of Corelli, and his contemporaries and followers and to the music of Mozart no less than to the

works of the 19th century masters — was never allowed to distort the formal graces of a work. Thus, he found in the violin music of Bach a profundity and extent of emotion which he could express without ever allowing himself to be inhibited by the extreme technical difficulty of the unaccompanied sonatas and partitas. Everything he played had the essential integrity of a fine musician's devotion to the task of expressing the work and not his own view of it.

Until extreme old age caught up with him Milstein showed an astonishing physical resilience which enabled him to carry on playing long after the time when most masters have given up. He gave master classes at the Juilliard School of Music in New York and continued to teach in Zurich, besides keeping up a punishing pace on the concert platform.

When he was eventually compelled to stop playing at the age of 84 an accident — a fall which left him unable to handle his violin — and not muscular decline was the cause. He did not, however, turn aside from musical activity and continued to keep mentally active by transcribing piano works for the violin.

He was married to Therese Weldon and they had one daughter.

STELLA ADLER

Stella Adler, considered by many to be America's leading teacher of acting, died of heart failure at her home in Los Angeles on December 21 aged 91. She was born in Manhattan on February 10, 1901.

RAGING, purring, cursing and cajoling, Stella Adler was an unforgettable teacher for thousands of aspiring young performers at her Conservatory of Acting in Manhattan. As an exponent of "Method" acting, which she studied with its originator, Konstantin Stanislavsky, she helped to shape the careers of such stars as Marion Brando, Warren Beatty, and Robert De Niro.

"Stella," wrote Foster Hirsch in his 1984 book *A Method to the Madness*, "is theatrical royalty who instils in her students a sense of the nobility of acting. She dares her students to act, to lift their bodies and their voices to be larger than themselves to love language and ideas.

She was no mean actress herself, first appearing on

stage at the age of five with the Independent Yiddish Art Company, in which her parents were leading players, and later as a leading member of the Group Theatre, which revolutionised American drama during the Depression years. In all she appeared in nearly 200 plays in the United States and abroad, including the 1961 London production of the black comedy *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mama Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feeling So Sad*.

But it was her teaching, after she opened her school in 1949, for which she will be best remembered. Though they both espoused the Method, Adler's approach differed markedly from that of Lee Strasberg, who ran the rival Actors Studio until his death in 1982. Strasberg based his teaching on Stanislavsky's early belief that an actor should perform extensive "affective memory" exercises, improvising and conjuring up "the conscious past" to convey emotion.

Such teaching had a profound effect on her students. Said one: "Stella Adler taught me more in five minutes today than any of my other teachers have taught me in five years."

Her own views on the value of teaching were uncharacteristically modest. "The teacher has to inspire, to agitate," she wrote. "You cannot teach acting. You can only stimulate what's already there."

Mercurial in her personality, with honey-blonde hair and grey-green eyes, she conveyed the later Stanislavsky message with an aristocratic poise. "Your talent is in your imagination."

"The rest is life. You must get away from the real thing because the real thing will limit your acting and cripple you. To think of your own mother's death each time you want to cry onstage is schizophrenic and sick. Don't use your conscious past," Adler advised.

Such teaching had a profound effect on her students. Said one: "Stella Adler taught me more in five minutes today than any of my other teachers have taught me in five years."



ON THE SLAVE TRADE

Should a question now arise, as it naturally will, why... large supplies of imported Africans should be annually necessary for keeping up the working flock for the plantations? — the truth must be told, though it affects the credit of West-Indian humanity — they are prevented by oppression from multiplying their species. Incessant labor is all that is required at their hands; yet "plantation work is asserted to be in itself not peculiarly hard; but it is the use of strength instead of contrivance, it is want of food, of clothes, of rest and sleep, which wears out slaves; it is this drawing out their work from early dawn to dusky night, it is their wandering three or four miles under the meridian sun, to pick up bundles of grass, that consumes their hardships: the fate of these miserable wretches is therefore not a matter of accident, but of calculated certainty; for a cruel task-master will undertake that the unrelenting toll of his slaves for four years, shall reimburse him their prime cost and expenses of maintenance — Death then

ON THIS DAY

December 26 1787

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NEWS

Bush 'now subject of enquiry'

■ In an angry atmosphere in Washington after presidential action pardoned six former Reagan officials for their involvement in the Iran-Contra affair, Lawrence Walsh, the independent prosecutor, declared that President Bush himself was now the subject of investigation.

In pardoning Caspar Weinberger, the former defence secretary, Mr Bush had "pardoned a man who committed the same type of misconduct that he did" Pages 1, 7, 13

Rabin blocks Red Cross supplies

■ Overriding strong opposition inside his own cabinet, Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister, yesterday blocked Red Cross supplies bound for the 415 deported Palestinians trapped in the south of Lebanon Pages 1, 10

Carey rebuff

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, used his Christmas sermon in Canterbury Cathedral to criticise those that attack people in authority in a "meanness of spirit" Page 1

Mother killed

Sarah Monelle, a young mother, was killed and nine other revelers were injured when they were hit by a car after a rugby club party at Keynsham, near Bath Page 1

Stressed police

As many as 3,000 London police officers will have received treatment or counselling this year for stress-related disorders, a problem now recognised as serious and growing Page 5

Letters alarm

The Chartwell papers, which cover Winston Churchill's life up to 1945, are to be sold by the Churchill family trust, raising concern among 20th century historians that the 5,000-file archive will be broken up Page 4

Everest costs go sky-high

The cost of attempting to climb Everest has multiplied seven fold within a year, according to the British Mountaineering Council. From next autumn, expeditions will be asked to pay up to £45,000. This, say the Nepalese, is to protect the mountain's environment Page 5



Family gathering: the Queen, taking a firm grip on the many bouquets presented by well-wishers, is accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales, Zara Phillips and Prince Harry for Christmas day service at Sandringham church. Page 2

FOOTBALL

Football: Ted Croker, a former secretary of the Football Association, has died, aged 68, at his home in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, after a long illness Pages 15, 17

Racing: Severe frost has reduced the traditional Boxing day feast with Huntingdon, Market Rasen, Weatherby, Sedgefield and Wolverhampton having been called off Page 22, 23

BUSINESS

BAA setback: Shares in British Aerospace closed 5p down at 157p having touched 152p in Christmas eve trading after the company had revealed a shortfall of £500 million in its cash flow Page 32

Markets: The pound gained .0015 cents against the dollar closing at \$1.533 and was up .0016 pence against the Deutsche mark to close at DM2.4408. The FT-SE closed up .1 at 2827.5 Page 32

Farmer's Diary: If you think your relations are awkward at Christmas, count yourself lucky. Having reared her last litter of piglets to the ripe old age of ten weeks, Phoebe, our young sow, is now ready to give her undivided attention to the founding of the next. Paul Heiney writes Weekend, page 3

Hunter's confessions: Although ethics now prevent her from hunting, Annie Rankin still recalls the heady excitement of the Boxing day meet Weekend, page 3

Feather report: Derwent May investigates the possible rewards of a walk down the lane and into the wood on Boxing day morning Weekend, page 3

FEASTING

Nasal skills: Test your knowledge of single malts, apply your nose to our blind tasting kit, and you could be Britain's 1993 malt whisky buff Weekend, page 4

Taking off: Win a flight and tickets to a great American sporting event; or simply apply for our special offer with Northwest Airlines Weekend, page 6

If your pulse quickens at the prospect of a bargain in the January sales, arm yourself for the fray with our nationwide stores guide Weekend, pages 12, 13

Weekend, page 8

Hangover cures: Recommendations on how to restore that good cheer are recalled by Frank Jeffrey Weekend, page 3

Lefsover disguises: If your family would mutiny at one more turkey sandwich, Frances Bissell suggests some clever disguises for leftovers Weekend, page 5

ALAN COREN

Across the desk from him a BT salesman is being just as jolly, for though it may be more blessed to give than to receive, to sell is most blessed of all. What they are being jolly about is the buyer's private life, for until this is laid out on the desk the buyer will not be permitted to buy Weekend, page 7

SIMON JENKINS

I first laid eyes on Vermeer's *Guitar Player* in 1974 when she was convalescing on her stretcher in a humble Kenwood bedroom. She had been stoked three months before by persons unknown Page 12

MARY KILLEN

Every night I check the safety hazards in our tiny cottage. Having asked my husband to double-check, I mount the staircase, carefully staring at the ground to preclude my taking a tumble on discarded objects Weekend, page 1

One of the best holiday offerings charts the career and personal life of Enid Blyton. Bookmark *Sunny Stories*. BBC2 9.50pm, Saturday Weekend, page 16

OPINION**A moment for mercy**

Mr Bush's pardons will not drop on Washington with the gentleness of rain from heaven. But the verdict on the Iran-Contra affair is now best left to history than to further legal inquisitions Page 13

Pass the claret

Today, many a headache will be blamed on the excesses of yesterday. Gently contemplating the cold turkey and yesterday's emetics, we should remind ourselves that food is good for us and that drink in reasonable quantities is an elixir Page 13

Christmas past

(From December, 1926)

Boxing day is the day upon which certain workers, presumably (most of them really) in receipt of adequate wages, go round from house to house asking for gratuities. Of these approved mendicants some are but urchins whose rapacious mothers leave them scarce enough of their wages to find them in "cornets" and cigarettes others are grave and uniformed servants of the State Page 13

The trials and tribulations of the royal family, the crisis in Somalia and restoring the buildings of Moscow are among subjects exercising readers at holiday time Page 13

PEOPLES

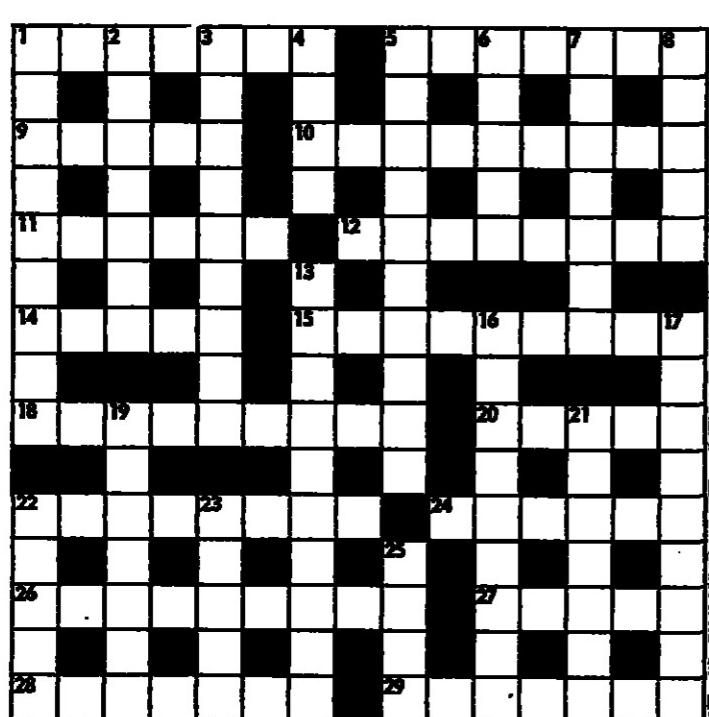
While the United Nations deals with spots of lesser tension in the world with decisiveness to implement its resolutions, Israel is regarded as an exceptional case. The world organisation turns its back on Arab causes, knowing that attempts to destroy the Arab character continue unabated

- al-Thawra, Damascus

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 19,111

PARKER A prize of a superb Parker Duofold International Fountain Pen, with an 18 carat gold nib and fully guaranteed for the lifetime of the original owner will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The winners and solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address _____

**ACROSS**

- 1 Room for Reading's scale railway? (7).
- 2 Being drowsy, allow hot cigar to fall? (9).
- 5 Swift-ish — creating a stir, leading Olympic finalist? (7).
- 9 Number of scouts sorry to return after end of August? (5).
- 10 Capital views, perhaps, of yemen's partners? (9).
- 11 It's an old boast — begone! (6).
- 12 God included in a prayer for overabundance? (3).
- 14 White ground used in lounges sometimes? (5).
- 15 Show flies on the range? (5-4).
- 18 Long-suffering left-half, according to the Barset Record? (9).
- 20 Flies in some houses? (5).
- 22 The Savoyard's resignation? (6).
- 24 Moving together from low arch on foot? (6).
- 26 How Tralee developed as an oasis? (5-4).
- 27 Rutter joins sappers' basic unit? (5).
- 28 Red rose embroidered in piece of tapestry? (7).
- 29 One who has charge of a boxer, for example? (7).

Concise Crossword, Weekend section, page 18

Solution to Puzzle No 19,110

SERIF GROUNDSDEL
O O O L E O E
UNDERHAND WELSH
TIE T H T O A
HONEST TUGOFWAR
D T L N N H
ON THE CARDS TIEP
W R B R M S P R
NAIL FORECASTLE
T P R D N I
SHERIDAN BIGWIG
W N S T B F R H
AVERT OVEREXERT
R S O R N S C E
MISPLAYED TAKER

Solution to Puzzle No 19,106

THOMAS FATALIST
E A H E B E U
LADYKILLER GOBI
R F N L M I S
STILETTO INTO TOTO
O D W N A
DROWNS TOUCHING
E E S R S I C
PATRICIA TIEN
T O V S P
WHILST ESTRANGE
E I C L R R
SUB HULLABALOO
R R E E N D O
LYSANDER DREARY

THE TIMES WEATHER

For the latest regional by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0891 500 followed by the appropriate code.

Greater London 701
Kent, Surrey, Sussex 702
Berkshire, Oxford & 100 miles 703
Dorset & Cornwall 704
Wiltshire, Avon, Somerset 705
Berkshire, Oxon, Wiltshire 706
Bedfordshire & Essex 707
Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambs 708
West Mif & Shropshire & Gwent 709
Shropshire, Herefs & Worcs 710
Central Midlands 711
East Midlands 712
Lincs & Humberside 713
Dyfed & Powys 714
Wales & Chwyd 715
N.W. England 716
W. & S. Yorks & Dales 717
N.E. England 718
Cumbria & Lake District 719
S.W. Scotland 720
W. Central Scotland 721
Edin & Fife/Lothian & Borders 722
E. Central Scotland 723
Glenlivet, Grampian & Highlands 724
N.W. Scotland 725
Orkney, Shetland 726
N Ireland 727

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M25/M4/M25 734
National motorways 735
West Country 736
Wales 737
Midlands 740
East Anglia 741
North-west England 742
North-east England 743
Scotland 744
Northern Ireland 745

National traffic and roadworks

National motorways 737

West Country 738

Wales 739

Midlands 740

East Anglia 741

North-west England 742

North-east England 743

Scotland 744

Northern Ireland 745

AA Roadwatch is charged at 36p per minute (cheap rate) and 48p per minute at all other times.

England and Wales will be dull and misty, with freezing fog in the North East at first. Scotland will be dry, bright and sunny after early freezing fog and frost except in the south, where cloud and outbreaks of light rain will give way to the brighter conditions. Northern Ireland will be mainly cloudy with outbreaks of light rain. Outlook: continuing dry and settled, but becoming colder with more widespread frost and freezing fog by night.

MIDDAY: Thunder; d-dizzle; lg-fog; s-sun; sl-select; sn-snow; -is-fair; c-cloudy; r-rain; f-fog; 1-light rain; 2-moderate rain; 3-heavy rain; 4-downpour; 5-torrential rain; 6-hail; 7-thunderstorms; 8-tropical storm; 9-tsunami; 10-tornado; 11-hurricane; 12-tropical cyclone; 13-tropical depression; 14-low pressure area; 15-anticyclone; 16-ridge; 17-ridge of high pressure; 18-low pressure trough; 19-low pressure area; 20-ridge; 21-ridge of high pressure; 22-anticyclone; 23-ridge; 24-ridge of high pressure; 25-low pressure area; 26-ridge; 27-ridge of high pressure; 28-anticyclone; 29-ridge; 30-ridge of high pressure; 31-low pressure area; 32-ridge; 33-ridge of high pressure; 34-anticyclone; 35-ridge; 36-ridge of high pressure; 37-low pressure area; 38-ridge; 39-ridge of high pressure; 40-anticyclone; 41-ridge; 42-ridge of high pressure; 43-ridge; 44-ridge of high pressure; 45-ridge; 46-ridge of high pressure; 47-ridge; 48-ridge of high pressure; 49-ridge; 50-ridge of high pressure; 51-ridge; 52-ridge of high pressure; 53-ridge; 54-ridge of high pressure; 55-ridge; 56-ridge of high pressure; 57-ridge; 58-ridge of high pressure; 59-ridge; 60-ridge of high pressure; 61-ridge; 62-ridge of high pressure; 63-ridge; 64-ridge of high pressure; 65-ridge; 66-ridge of high pressure; 67-ridge; 68-ridge of high pressure; 69-ridge; 70-ridge of high pressure; 71-ridge; 72-ridge of high pressure; 73-ridge; 74-ridge of high pressure; 75-ridge; 76-ridge of high pressure; 77-ridge; 78-ridge of high pressure; 79-ridge; 80-ridge of high pressure; 81-ridge; 82-ridge of high pressure; 83-ridge; 84-ridge of high pressure; 85-ridge; 86-ridge of high pressure; 87-ridge; 88-ridge of high pressure; 89-ridge; 90-ridge of high pressure; 91-ridge; 92-ridge of high pressure; 93-ridge; 94-ridge of high pressure; 95-ridge; 96-ridge of high pressure; 97-ridge; 98-ridge of high pressure; 99-ridge; 100-ridge of high pressure; 101-ridge; 102-ridge of high pressure; 103-ridge; 104-ridge of high pressure; 105-ridge; 106-ridge of high pressure; 107-ridge; 108-ridge of high pressure; 109-ridge; 110-ridge of high pressure; 111-ridge; 112-ridge of high pressure; 113-ridge; 114-ridge of high pressure; 115-ridge; 116-ridge of high pressure; 117-ridge; 118-ridge of high pressure; 119-ridge; 120-ridge of high pressure; 121-ridge; 122-ridge of high pressure; 123-ridge; 124-ridge of high pressure; 125-ridge; 126-ridge of high pressure; 127-ridge; 128-ridge of high pressure; 129-ridge; 130-ridge of high pressure; 131-ridge; 132-ridge of high pressure; 133-ridge; 134-ridge of high pressure; 135-ridge; 136-ridge of high pressure; 137-ridge; 138-ridge of high pressure; 139-ridge; 140-ridge of high pressure; 141-ridge; 142-ridge of high pressure; 143-ridge; 144-ridge of high pressure; 145-ridge; 146-ridge of high pressure; 147-ridge; 148-ridge of high pressure; 149-ridge; 150-ridge of high pressure; 151-ridge; 152-ridge of high pressure; 153-ridge; 154-ridge of high pressure; 155-ridge; 156-ridge of high pressure; 157-ridge; 158-ridge of high pressure; 159-ridge; 160-ridge of high pressure; 161-ridge; 162-ridge of high pressure; 163-ridge; 164-ridge of high pressure; 165-ridge; 166-ridge of high pressure; 167-ridge; 168-ridge of high pressure; 169-ridge; 170-ridge of high pressure; 171-ridge; 172-ridge of high pressure; 173-ridge; 174-ridge of high pressure; 175-ridge; 176-ridge of high pressure; 177-ridge; 178-ridge of high pressure; 179-ridge; 180-ridge of high pressure; 181-ridge; 182-ridge of high pressure; 183-ridge; 184-ridge of high pressure; 185-ridge; 186-ridge of high pressure; 187-ridge; 188-ridge of high pressure; 189-ridge; 190-ridge of high pressure; 191-ridge; 192-ridge of high pressure; 193-ridge; 194-ridge of high pressure; 195-ridge; 196-ridge of high pressure; 197-ridge; 198-ridge of high pressure; 199-ridge; 200-ridge of high pressure; 201-ridge; 202-ridge of high pressure; 203-ridge; 204-ridge of high pressure;



PORTRAIT 19

Gooch poised as England expects once again



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Carling's place in the glittering memories of 1992



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Profile pins down Smith New Court's master tactician

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THE TIMES

2

SATURDAY DECEMBER 26 1992

Francis keeps faith with striker

Hirst hungers to rediscover scoring touch

By IAN ROSS

DAVID Hirst, the Sheffield Wednesday forward, has much to prove over Christmas and the new year. Hirst, who is vying for a place in the England side for their World Cup qualifying matches, has failed to score in five matches since his club turned down an offer of £3.5 million from Manchester United.

Today, United go to Hillsborough with not only the best defensive record in the Premier League but also Eric Cantona, whose arrival at Old Trafford has rekindled the United attack and their championship ambitions.

Hirst has scored nine goals in 16 league and cup matches this season but has seen Ian Wright and Alan Shearer overtake him for an England place. His manager, Trevor Francis, says he is not concerned. "David and I have spoken this week," he said. "He feels he can play better and he is working hard to get that goal — he's not worrying and I'm certainly not."

Of a United side which has conceded 14 league goals, Francis said: "I think that over the last couple of years, since they have got Paliester, Bruce, Parker and Irwin together,

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norwich	20	12	3	5	34	34	39
Aston Villa	20	9	8	3	31	31	35
Blackburn	20	8	9	3	27	17	34
Man Utd	20	9	7	4	22	14	34
Chelsea	20	9	6	5	27	21	33
Arsenal	20	7	11	2	25	22	32
Cov	20	9	3	8	25	27	30
Coventry	20	8	5	7	26	23	23
Liverpool	20	8	4	8	34	32	21
Man City	20	7	5	6	27	23	20
Millwall	20	6	6	8	31	31	19
Tottenham	20	6	6	8	22	24	19
Leeds	20	5	9	7	22	25	23
Sheff Wed	20	5	8	7	21	23	22
Southampton	20	5	8	7	17	24	22
Everton	20	5	4	10	17	24	21
C Palace	20	5	3	9	13	23	21
Sheff Utd	20	5	6	9	18	26	21
Wimbledon	20	4	7	9	28	31	19
Notm Forest	20	3	6	11	19	31	15

United have the best defence in the country — and they have a good goalkeeper in Schmeichel."

While the form of Mark Hughes since Cantona's signing has pleased Alex Ferguson, the United manager takes greater delight in the efforts of Lee Sharpe. Sharpe, who has suffered from injuries and illness over the past year, has shown the form which won him an international call two seasons ago.

Three of the goals in United's past four wins have come from Sharpe's crosses.

Ferguson said: "Sharpe is a producer. He is a great crosser of the ball and his return to the team has helped us to be more positive up front."

Leeds United, who beat Manchester United to the championship last season, are out of contention this year, but yesterday, Howard Wilkinson, the Leeds manager, suggested that the inaugural winners of the Premier League could be Blackburn Rovers whom Leeds meet at Ewood Park this afternoon.

Wilkinson is impressed by the Lancashire club's rise from relative obscurity to national prominence under the astute management of Kenny Dalglish and the continuing financial input of Jack Walker.

Blackburn have lost a few league games so far but, then again, so have the other leading teams," Wilkinson said.

"That was not the situation last season, when Manchester United and ourselves were going so well. There can be no comparisons because this is proving to be a quite different sort of race."

"I am not too surprised at their position. Having money does not guarantee success nor does it guarantee the recruitment of good players. Money can be wasted, but if you do have the ability to buy good players, it is a great start. It does seem that Jack Walker will go on and on pursuing success for his club."

Kenny Dalglish has already been at a club which was used to spending money and used to signing the best players available. He has a good idea about working at the top level and winning trophies. On top of his abilities you then add the fact that this is Blackburn's first season back in the top flight. There will be a newness, a freshness about the place; everyone involved will be thrilled by the experience. Add to that a manager who has seen it all before, and the fact that Jack Walker seems totally committed, and you have a fair recipe of success."

In search of a first away victory, Wilkinson may recall Barry and Sferland to help stiffen the Leeds midfield and defence respectively. Sferland, the former England full back, has not played a senior game for nine months because of an ankle injury.

There will be a pitch inspection at Boundary Park this morning to determine whether the match between Oldham and Liverpool can go ahead.

The Barclays League matches between Luton Town and Swindon, and Scarborough and Barnet, were called off yesterday to add to two postponements on Thursday, the games at Cambridge United and Chesterfield.

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Wales Weekly Star

Stuart Jones, football correspondent, gives his half-term report on the Premier League

Norwich continue to confound the critics

As coffee was served in a German restaurant a few weeks ago, five football correspondents or analysts were asked to predict the two teams most likely to finish at the top of the Premier League.

The forecast was almost unanimous. The title will be collected on May 8 by either Manchester United or Aston Villa, with Arsenal as the most threatening outsiders. Not one vote was cast in favour of Norwich City, who were eight points clear at the time.

Maybe unfairly, Norwich have been accorded the status of the unknown golfer who traditionally leads the Open Championship. Following the path of a shooting star, he bursts into prominence before plummeting predictably back towards obscurity. The East Anglians are already beginning to feel the power of gravitation pull.

Before their indignant followers protest, it should be added that nobody would begrudge Norwich the ultimate prize. In matching the appeal of a club long renowned for its charm, Mike Walker's side has earned respect which has spread far beyond the local environment.

In their defence, Norwich can extend the golfing analogy and point out that seldom has the championship been so open. The first half of the inaugural Premier League season, though of poor quality, has been distinguished by a remarkable set of curiosities that have defied logic.

Make sense of the following examples.

The champions, Leeds United, have collected three points away from Elland Road. Arsenal won six successive matches and then, without even scoring, lost four on the trot. Nottingham Forest have won more fixtures in the Coca-Cola Cup than in the league. Manchester United divided a run of nine consecutive victories with seven matches without a win. Coventry City ended a joyless sequence of 11 games by humiliating Liverpool 5-1. The famous Anfield fortress was even breached four times by Chesterfield of the third (formerly fourth) division.

Consider, too, some individual statistics. Who could have foreseen that Niall Quinn would score one goal in Manchester City's last 15 League games or that John Fashanu and Teddy Sheringham (other than penalties) would each so far have claimed only two? Who would have thought that Kerry Dixon and David Speedie, reunited at Southampton, would strike only once between them?

In such bizarre circumstances it would be fitting if the most unpredictable of transfers should carry a heavy bearing on the destiny of the championship. It was initiated a month ago by a telephone call from Elland Road to The Cliff,

Manchester United's training ground, enquiring about the availability of Denis Irwin.

Alex Ferguson refused to sell his Irish full back and, having heard whispers that Eric Cantona was growing restless, asked, as much in jest as anything else, whether the French maverick could be bought. United's manager was surprised to hear within 20 minutes that the answer was yes. Provisional agreement was instantly reached.

Ferguson acquired Cantona largely on a whim and was not disguising the vagueness of his intentions when he claimed he did not know how he would rearrange his attack. Nevertheless, he appreciated that the Frenchman's arrival would stir his players and generate enthusiasm around Old Trafford. United have since been unbeaten.

The move sparked Mark Hughes, in particular, and he was the decisive figure in one of the most significant results so far. His solitary goal against Norwich a

'Viewers can now see for themselves that the domestic game, conducted at a speed which is becoming ever more ferocious, is hurtling towards mediocrity when compared to the Italian version.'

fortnight ago promises to be seen in the forthcoming months as worth far more than three points. On that afternoon, the momentum at the top of the table changed, perhaps irreversibly.

After last season's demoralising finale, United will not care to be reminded of the importance of sustaining impetus. Ferguson realises when it will be particularly valuable. Ever since the day the fixture-list was revealed, his attention has been caught by his club's programme in March.

Liverpool and Oldham Athletic away, Villa at home, the Manchester derby at Maine Road, Arsenal at home and Norwich away, Ferguson agrees that when his side will either rise or fall under the weight of the expectations heaped upon it. Will Cantona's magic have rubbed off by then?

It would be ironic if Ron Atkinson, relieved of the managerial post at Old Trafford for failing to end the obsessive pursuit of the championship, should now deny his former employers. Villa, who have already knocked United out of the

Coca-Cola Cup, appear to be their strongest rivals.

The second weekend in March, when the pair are to meet in Manchester, threatens to be pivotal. The fear of defeat will doubtless be as prevalent then as it has been throughout the first half of the campaign. Regrettably, the balance between construction and destruction has shifted even further towards the negative.

Chelsea and Ipswich Town, for all their admirable defensive qualities, are asphyxiating the interest of neutral observers as well as their opponents. The smothering tactics are successful because all too few sides have inventive individuals capable of extricating themselves from the physical warfare habitually waged in central midfield.

Arsenal are a case in point. They replaced an artist, David Rocastle, with an artisan, John Jensen. Neither he nor the limited David Hillier is accustomed to retaining the ball. The pace of their game has consequently quickened and, with the erratic Ian Wright and Kevin Campbell up front, often runs out of their control.

The favourites in August, they will probably set a precedent if they do regain the title. No champions have ever suffered more than eight defeats. Arsenal, as well as Leeds and Liverpool, have already lost eight times and would, in almost any other season, be well out of contention.

Yet they are only five points below Villa, whom they visit on Monday. That, another summit meeting of potentially heavy import, will be the thirtieth Premier League fixture to be shown live on television. As Brian Clough has intimated, the coverage is heading towards saturation point.

"Soon there will be six people in the stands," the Forest manager says, "and everybody else will be sitting back in their armchairs." At least viewers can now see for themselves that the domestic game, conducted at a speed which is becoming ever more ferocious, is hurtling towards mediocrity when compared to the Italian version.

The new back-pass rule, introduced primarily to eradicate tedious timewasting in Italy and Spain, has merely accelerated the process. Gordon Strachan, for one, insists that dwelling on the ball, an ability for which he is nowadays almost unique, is virtually impossible. "You try it," he snorts.

Avoiding injury has always been a prerequisite for any club with title pretensions, such as Norwich. Never before, though, will the English champions have had to work more diligently or shed as much perspiration over nine months. The Premier League, more a series of jarring collisions than elegant exhibitions, is a survival of the fittest.



Will the magic wear off? High hopes rest upon Cantona at Old Trafford

Hartlepool raided by bailiffs

By LOUISE TAYLOR

HARTLEPOOL United, of the Barclays League second division, have had £20,000 worth of goods seized by bailiffs as part of legal action taken against them by Cleveland County Council over alleged non-payment of police costs for matches at the Victoria Ground last season. The council claims to be owed "in the region of £49,000".

Brighton, of the second division, have come up with a financial package which could save the club. Brighton, who have debts of £2.6 million, must go to an adjourned High Court hearing in February to answer an winding-up order brought by the Inland Revenue.

The Inland Revenue claims Brighton owe almost £400,000 in unpaid PAYE tax. Now Brighton believe they have solved the crisis by raising a commercial mortgage of £3.5 million on the Goldstone Ground, which they own.

Andy Gray, the Tottenham Hotspur midfield player, has joined Swindon Town on a month's loan. Gray, signed last season for £750,000 from Crystal Palace, has not started a game for Spurs since September 19.

The Colchester United centre-half, Darren Oxbrow, has joined the third division leaders, Barnet, on a free transfer.

Walker has much to crow about

By MIKE WALKER

MIKE Walker, the Norwich manager, will be the first to extend a sincere welcome when the Tottenham Hotspur team coach arrives at Carrow Road for today's match between the sides.

"We have done very well out of Tottenham," Walker said. "Four of my team today — Mark Bowen, John Polston, Ian Culverhouse and Ian Crook — started out at Spurs, and we've off-loaded to Norwich for nothing or next to nothing."

The skills honed at Tottenham have helped lift Norwich four points clear at the head of the Premier League — while Tottenham tread water in mid-table.

Linighans line up at Highbury

IN FRONT of their proud parents, Brian and Olwyn, the Linighan brothers line up on opposing sides for the first time in five years when Arsenal play Ipswich Town in the Premier League game at Highbury today. The suspension of the Arsenal captain, Tony Adams, has given Andy Linighan, a rare first-team start at centre half, while his brother, David, occupies the same position for Ipswich.

Even though the Arsenal player has not enjoyed the best of fortunes since joining from Norwich City, the atmosphere the pair share tomorrow will be heavier than their last encounter. That came five years ago, in the former second division, when Andy was at Oldham Athletic and David at Shrewsbury Town. If a pointer to form is needed, Shrewsbury won that game 2-0 and David scored the second goal.

Ipswich are one of the country's most improved sides, while Arsenal are looking to end a run of five games without a win. George Graham, the home manager, has demanded more consistency from Arsenal to justify their position as pre-season title favourites. "We have the talent to win the championship," he said. "Now we must find the

Sham Teale, the Aston Villa defender, intends to leave his sick-bed to halt the scoring run of Coventry City's prolific striker, Mick Quinn, at Highfield Road today. Teale was sent home in mid-week because of a stomach bug, but his presence is seen as essential if Villa are to restore their title challenge.

Quinn has scored eight times in five matches since moving from Newcastle United. "He doesn't run very fast but he has a horrible knack of being in the right place at the right time," Teale said.

He has scored eight times in five matches since moving from Newcastle United. "He doesn't run very fast but he has a horrible knack of being in the right place at the right time," Teale said.

Teale is the Premier League's leading scorer and I am proud of producing such a right time," Teale said.

One young player Walker trusts is absorbing plenty of the right habits at White Hart Lane is his son Ian. Walker Jr is the Tottenham reserve goalkeeper — although he commanded a first-team place for several matches before becoming injured earlier this season — and is likely to be on the substitutes' bench today as understudy to Erik Thorstvedt.

"Obviously Ian has been very disappointed to lose his place," his father, himself once a lower-division goalkeeper, said. "But I've always taught him to keep his feet on the ground because football is full of ups and downs and the secret of success is learning how to cope with the downs."

Talking of which, Norwich

have just lost two successive Premier League games — at Manchester United and at home to Ipswich. While badly wanting to win today, Walker has taken such setbacks in his stride. "When I took over as manager in the summer if someone had told me we would be four points clear at Christmas I'd have felt they were winding me up — so it is position I'm happy to settle for."

After losing an FA Cup semi-final to Sunderland last spring, Norwich plummeted down the table, narrowly avoided relegation and accepted the resignation of Dave Stringer, Walker's predecessor.

High-profile names were touted but Walker — 48 and a former Colchester United manager — was eventually promoted from reserve team coach.

Walker attributes the transformation to "a few small changes". Such as? "Well I went and brought an out-and-out natural goalscorer [Mark Robins from Manchester United for £800,000] because I believe every team needs one."

"Then I made sure we spent a lot more time working on crossing in training because strikers stand or fall by the quality of the centres they get. To win consistently teams must be able to cross into the danger areas."

"We are the Premier

League's leading scorers and I am proud of producing such a

right time," Teale said.

There is no provision yet for any Scottish Cup replays which might be necessary so a further addition to the midweek schedule would be highly unwelcome. If today's game should go ahead, Brown is the only Rangers player who will not be considered.

Celtic and Dundee United

meet at Parkhead in a match

which is vital if the home

team are to sustain their hope

of keeping Rangers within

reach. Six points separate the

Glasgow rivals. Rangers have

two games in hand, and they

collide at Ibrox next Saturday.

Rangers afraid of further congestion

By RODDY FORSYTH

Rangers manager, Liam Brady, is anxious to see his team achieve consistency while there is still time to put Rangers under pressure.

Brady will not have

Wdowczyk, who is suffering

from a long-term injury, available

but otherwise has a full

squad. United must do without Bolland, who is suspended.

Heart of Midlothian hope to continue their revival against Partick Thistle at Tynecastle. They may have to rearrange their defence as van de Ven has not recovered from a back injury. He will undergo a late test. Thistle will probably not field McAvinnie and Palin, both of whom should make their debuts against Motherwell next week.

Motherwell are at home to Aberdeen today in a fixture which has given the northern side trouble in recent years. Shearer is still absent for Aberdeen but otherwise the Pittodrie manager will have continuity of selection as he attempts to maintain his side's challenge to Rangers.

Elsewhere, St Johnstone meet Airdrieonians at MacDiarmid Park while Falkirk and Hibernian make up the card at Brockville.

Bobby Davidson, the former referee, vice-president of the Scottish League and a director of Airdrieonians, has died at the age of 64.

ATHLETICS

Sprinter plans appeal on ban

By JOHN GOODBODY

JASON Livingston, the British athlete sent home from the Olympic Games in Barcelona yesterday predicted that his four-year drugs ban would be overturned once an independent jury had heard his appeal.

The sprinter insisted that the disciplinary committee of the British Athletics Federation (BAF) had only confirmed that he was guilty of taking anabolic steroids because it was afraid that admitting a mistake would lead to financial compensation for the athlete.

The European indoor 60 metres champion said: "Thank god, my appeal will be heard by an independent jury, people not involved with athletics. I think, in that way, the truth will be known and I will be found innocent."

The suspension of Livingston, the second-fastest British 100 metres sprinter after Linford Christie, was confirmed on Wednesday. He failed to provide an adequate explanation why a drugs test, carried out in England by the Sports Council, had shown traces of the hormone drug, methandrostenolone.

He said: "I half-expect they would find me guilty. It makes them look good now they've found me guilty — and the Federation wasn't going to admit to a mistake, because after the Butch Reynolds case it would have been too expensive for them."

Livingston was referring to the decision by an American court to order the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) to pay £1.7 million in damages to Reynolds. The court found in favour of the world 400 metres record-holder in his legal battle to clear his name of an alleged offence in 1990.

While the BAF has said it will fight in the courts to uphold the verdict, Livingston's advisers were considering an appeal. This has to be made within 21 days. They have claimed that certain "analytical" information about Livingston's test had been "suppressed" because Dr David Cowan, the director of the drug control centre at King's College, London University, said it was not relevant.

They will make a formal request for the documents to be released because they believe they could prove crucial to his defence.

The basis of any appeal would be on scientific grounds. Although Livingston's solicitors have not revealed his defence, they may try to enlist scientific experts to study any new evidence.

Livingston asks why a test should have shown up positive for an outdated, little-used steroid after he had already given three clean samples during tests earlier in the year. He said: "I am only 21 years old. I have got my whole future ahead of me. Why the hell after being ranked seventh in the world should I take steroids?" Cynics might answer that he might have taken hormone drugs because he wanted to rank No. 1.

IN BRIEF

Keino plans to appeal

Bob Keino, son of the 1968 Olympic 1,500 metres champion, Kipchoge, plans to appeal against a decision which deprived him of his state high school cross-country title. The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association's eligibility appeals committee has ruled that Keino had transferred to Ridgewood in September 1991 for athletic, rather than academic, reasons in violation of its rules.

Cheer for Kent

Cricket: Kent, who announced record profits last week, have signed a three-year sponsorship deal with Shepherd Neame, the Faversham brewery, worth £75,000.

Graf leads field

Tennis: Five of the world's top women players, led by Steffi Graf, will compete in the Pan Pacific open tournament in Tokyo, which begins on February 2.

CORRECTION

We have been asked to point out that Irving Scholar's account of life at Tottenham Hotspur in the 1980s is titled "Behind Closed Doors" and not as reported on Thursday.

"Quite remarkable!"

Rediscover nostalgic sporting moments

and the definitive guide to 1993

in today's Saturday Review

Saturday portrait: Graham Gooch, by Alan Lee, cricket correspondent

ILLUSTRATION: STEVE MARTIN

Inspirational captain who stands supreme as a pillar of strength

Granted a deathbed wish to see one more innings by a contemporary Englishman, I would summon David Gower and hope for the best. But if my life was to depend on that single innings, I would unhesitatingly entrust it to Graham Gooch.

Therein lies a reason, if not a universally accepted one, why the England tour party to India, which gathers tomorrow near Gatwick airport, is led not by the nation's favourite cavalier but by the man whose most widely identified characteristic is dour pragmatism.

All nonsense, of course. Gooch is as adventurous as any cricketer, and more ambitious than most. The perception of dourness, encouraged by hangdog looks and plaintive voice, is now cultivated by Gooch himself with the quiet glee which betrays a strong and selective sense of humour.

No, the characteristic for which Gooch ought to be known is strength. Not just bodily strength, though he has developed this in abundance with an awesome fitness regime to thwart middle-age, but a strength of personality, so unsuspected that the chairman of the England committee once memorably likened him to a wet fish.

Ted Dexter has hastily revised his view since working with Gooch, while the players who served under him, these past three years, will testify that he is a captain of rare influence. Not since Mike Brearley has England been led by a man who could nominate his own team or, as Brearley did and Gooch may yet follow, have a voluntary break before being recalled to a job which needs him more than he needs it.

There is another significant similarity between the two. Brearley would not have been remembered as a Test cricketer of any note but for the aura of tactical genius he achieved as captain; Gooch, while unarguably a fine batsman, fell below the benchmark Test average of 40 until virtually doubling his output as captain. He is not, perhaps, the tactical equal of Brearley but he will go down as a comparably powerful captain.

Graham Alan Gooch was born,

40 years ago next July, in that area of east London better known for the dingy boxing hall than the green and pleasant cricket ground. There, the legend of gangland underworld renders fanciful any notion of offspring to buck the shires and varsity breeding of English cricket captains.

This, anyway, was the theory which lived with Gooch through his early life. He was not ashamed of his East End roots but was intensely aware of them, something which has never left him. Nowadays, this manifests itself in a justified, but unspoken, pride at overcoming what some, in cricketing hierarchy, would regard as a handicap.

He has a fierce pride, too, in his parents, and they in him. Alf and Rose never miss a match in which Graham is playing and their influence on him is profound. Alf, very much a Gooch with his plod

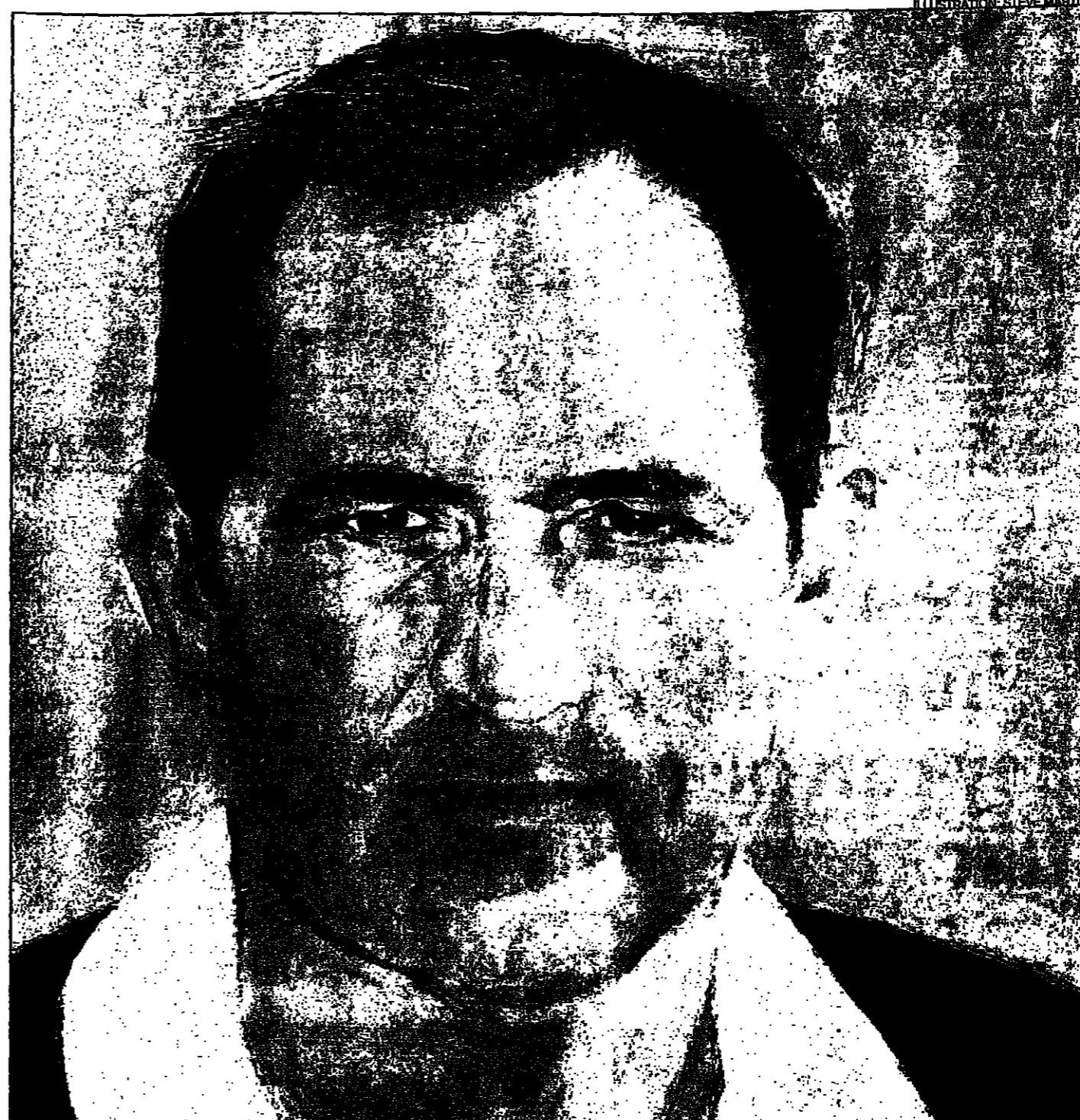
Captaincy lifted his head from the sand; it did not make him any less of a perfectionist, but gave him broader perspectives

and sloping shoulders, talks a lot about honesty, a quality his son inherited in full. And, from his parents and their environment, came Gooch's native stubbornness and his belief that friendship is to be earned and loyalty demanded.

His two forays into litigation were provoked by newspaper articles impugning his loyalty to England. He won substantial damages in both cases. The link was South Africa, to where Gooch retreated with a higher-than-desired profile in 1982 following, coincidentally, a tour of India which had disenchanted him. His shock over the ban which followed was matched only by his unswerving dedication to his motives.

This bleak period of his life brought a frostiness in his own family, for Alf never understood why he went, a resentful freeze with much of the media and the privileges have not spoiled him.

In fact, maturity and responsibility have made him a better



person as well as an immeasurably better player. He is more approachable, if only relatively, more willingly articulate and more aware of the problems, technical and psychological, of others around him.

This has allayed many fears. There was reason for concern that things would be different, that captaincy would detract from his own batting, as it had briefly done at Essex, and that his renowned intensity when things go wrong would work against his team. Dexter obviously feared as much

when his first act as chairman, in 1989, was to take the job away from Gooch.

It was not a great shock to Gooch, who had come to power only in a fourth-hand way during the post-Catting turmoil of 1988, but 1989 was the year in which he developed a taste for leadership. In his second spell as captain of Essex, now without the presence of his mentor, Keith Fletcher, he found the routine and the demands easier to handle and discovered, perhaps even to his own surprise, that he enjoyed involving

himself with the general welfare of the team and its components.

There had, in the past, been a selfishness about his cricket, not in the sense of batting for his average but in burying himself in his own game. If his batting had a technical hitch, and the same one has periodically afflicted him, he would shut himself off in pursuit of the remedy. Captaincy lifted his head from the sand; it did not make him any less of a perfectionist, or any less self-analytical, but it gave him broader perspectives.

He still chooses to have few close friends. He is still far from being an extrovert. And, demonstrably, he still finds the frivolity in the lifestyles of Gower, Botham and the like difficult to tolerate professionally.

This last trait means he may never gain the place in the public affection which Gower and Botham themselves have done. I doubt if he cares. Where outside opinion is concerned, Graham Gooch is unassuming to the point of dismissive. If asked to nominate his own epitaph, it would only be that he always did his best.

Phoenix rises from the ashes of folly

Mel Webb enters the speculative world of golf course development and charts the rise of the pay-as-you-play club in the midst of recessionary tales of half-built complexes and over-investment



On course: Tallack has designed a nine-hole success story in the capital

THE public's perception of the golf development business tends to be polarised — one popularly held view is that it is an industry under siege, the other that it is green gold gushing from a bottomless sporting oil well. The truth lies somewhere in between.

In the past couple of years or so, several top-of-the-range operations, offering a high-quality golf course and more often than not expensive ancillaries, have proved that not even golf, class act though it continues to be, is able necessarily to buck the recessionary trend of Britain in the early Nineties. Quietwaters in Essex, Broome Park in Kent and Slatley Hall near Hexham in Northumberland are classic cases in point.

The money men have been called in the hotels, the fitness centres and the leisure clubs attached to the parent clubs have closed — or in some cases not even been finished — and the receivers have been left holding expensive babies whose parents have deserted them. The golf courses have, by and large, remained open, but have experienced the difficulties that flow from too much ambition, over-investment, failure to identify a market and an insecure financial base. Golf under siege? In some cases, yes, without a doubt.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the spectrum, pay-as-you-play clubs that place the emphasis on bringing the Royal and Ancient game to countless thousands have, in most cases, thrived.

In the public golf sector, there are but two golden rules. If you have a product that sells at the right price and you do not turn your nose up at the man who has a swing like a blacksmith, you are on your way to wealth and the sure knowledge that you have contributed something to the nation's sporting heritage. Even Nick Faldo had to start somewhere.

You hear horror stories of these wannabe players; there seems no limit to the extent some people will go to get in their precious round of golf. In March of this year, Ken Ballman, a 68-year-old golf nut, almost lost his life when he developed hypothermia

while queuing for hours in freezing temperatures to book a game at a municipal course in Altrincham, Cheshire. He was in hospital for a week, but, typical of a million others like him, has not lost his enthusiasm for the game.

Colin Hegarty, who runs his own golf research company, has sympathy for the Ken Ballmans of this world, in parts of the country, such cases, sadly, are not unheard of. But, Hegarty says, the shock-horror headlines that suggest the industry is in terminal decline are largely premature.

There are even success stories in the rarified art of the exclusive, no-holds-barred luxury set-ups. Take The Oxfordshire, for example, sited on the edge of the Chiltern Hills, ten miles from Oxford. The club is owned by the Japanese Nitto Kogyo corpo-

ration that owns 35 golf clubs throughout the world, including Turnberry, which hosts the Open Championship in 1994. On the face of it, The Oxfordshire falls exactly into the high-risk area. The course, which rolls over more than 7,000 yards of prime land, will cost something like £200,000 per hole when it opens next May.

The developers have sacrificed nothing in their drive for quality — a course designed by Rees Jones, a member of the great American architectural dynasty, a clubhouse that will stand comparison with any in the world. That sort of golf does not come cheap — prospective members can gain admission only by purchasing a debenture that is going to cost £25,000 for an individual rising to £75,000 for a company.

So, are the developers wor-

ried that they might be building an expensive dinosaur in 260 acres of Oxfordshire countryside? Not at all, according to Alex McMillan, managing director of the club.

"We opened for subscriptions on October 1, and we have been delighted with the way things have gone," he said. "We know that our course will not be for everybody. But we are satisfied that there are quite enough people out there who will regard their purchase of a debenture with us as an investment. I believe that all types of course are necessary, but I also believe that there is a place in the market place for us."

Proof that there is life on the other side of the golfing tracks, meanwhile, could not be better exemplified than at Springfield Park, a course that opened in Wandsworth in London in the summer. In

RUGBY LEAGUE

Fixture congestion may not be enough to upset Wigan

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

CHAMPIONSHIP hopefuls should not rely on a backlog of fixtures disrupting Wigan's steady progress. Two seasons ago, they collected the league championship and Challenge Cup playing three — and one case four — matches a week in the final month.

The signs are that Wigan will have to pull off a similar feat this time, the one morsel of comfort being that they have still to encounter their main challengers in the Stones' Bitter championship.

They start that task tomorrow against St Helens, provided that industrial heaters being used on the Knowsley Road pitch have thawed it enough.

Private membership is available, but so is the opportunity to pay for your golf only when you play. Alternate tee times are offered to pay-as-you-play customers during the week; if you pick your time right, you can get a game of golf for a fiver.

"I believe firmly that this is the way golf is going to go in the next decade," Tallack said. "We are firmly in the business of educating people in the game of golf, and we're finding that they want to be taught the etiquette of the game and the standard it expects of its players."

The golf world is a club in itself, and it's that that we are trying to encourage here. After all, you can't build tradition, no matter how much you spend. What you can build is a warm and friendly atmosphere, and also prove that you don't have to sacrifice standards just because you are in the public golf end of the market. We want golf to be fun, and we think it is at our club."

So, is golf a fading product that is moving ever more steadily into crisis? In certain cases, it would appear so. In many more, both at the top and the tail of the industry, the conclusion is that the game has never been healthier. To paraphrase the words of the old song: it ain't what you do, it's the way — and the place, and the time — that you do it.

should they overcome Leeds, third from bottom, at Headingley this morning, where undersoil heating should guarantee a start.

There will be a series of early inspections at today's five other first-division venues. Hull have had their pitch covered for six nights and are optimistic of beating fifth-placed Sheffield Eagles and maintaining an undefeated run of seven league and cup games at The Boulevard.

Such are the vagaries of the fixture-list that Salford, who meet bottom-placed Leigh, have been idle for four weeks, while Wakefield Trinity should edge into the top eight at the expense of lowly Hull Kingston Rovers.

Jason Allen, of second-division Carlisle, has been suspended until the end of the season by the Rugby Football League disciplinary committee for pushing the referee and abusive language during an Alliance match against Shetland earlier this month.

For one million people the Boxing Day Meet doesn't mean leftover turkey

And there's nothing to stop you being one of them.

On Boxing Day, at pubs, in market squares and on village greens throughout the land, local hunts will be meeting. Many of these packs of hounds will have followers on horseback. All will have followers on foot. And you could be one of them.

Go on your own or with family or friends. Simply watch the hunt moving off, or walk off the Christmas pudding by following its progress.

Whichever you choose, the local farmers and the landowners will be pleased to welcome you.

The Boxing Day Meet is a marvellous generations-old rural tradition. If you would like to be part of it, call one of the telephone numbers below to find out where your local hunt will be meeting.



The North and Scotland: 0891 668896. Midlands and East Anglia: 0891 668897. Wales and the South West: 0891 668898. The South: 0891 668899. Calls charged at 40p per minute, peak and standard rates, 30p per minute cheap rate.

Staking a claim for a place in the millionaires' club



Robb: junior champion

Robin Davison-Lungley will join the millionaires' club if his four-year-old son, James, becomes the next Briton to win the Wimbledon men's singles. The bookmaker, William Hill, has given him 10,000-1 for his £100. "McEnroe has nothing on him as far as bad behaviour is concerned," the young offender's father said of his tennis-playing son. But you cannot be serious, Mr Davison-Lungley hears you say.

He is and he isn't. "There is a fairly large element of tongue in cheek about it," Davison-Lungley said. But a degree of seriousness, too. Little James plays once a week at the David Lloyd indoor centre at Raynes Park, south-west London, conveniently near to home, and dad is a qualified coach. In "a year or two" Davison-Lungley senior expects junior to be out court every day. Out of childhood practice, Wimbledon champions are made.

If you want to buy yourself a fun bet with some of that Christmas money, William Hill will listen to all offers. To fathers backing sons, the bookmaker will lose £150,000 if Charles Stead, 28th in the Yorkshire cross-country championship two weeks ago, wins the London Marathon in 2000, £250,000 if James Zanelli plays football for England before he is 25. Zanelli senior is looking forward to the day when junior is selling dummies, not sucking them. James Zanelli is three months old. Stead is backed at 3,000-1, Zanelli at 10,000-1.

According to Graham Sharpe, of William Hill, the company now encourages such bets after 20 years of frowning on them. Vast sums were lost to early 1960s punters taking 1,000-1 on a moonwalk before the end of the century. The bet struck by Alex Robb, that his son would win the Olym-

David Powell takes a lighthearted look at an off-beat way of trying to beat the recession.

Zanelli for England? A good bet at 10,000-1

pic 1,500 metres in 1996, is causing anxiety. Since the wager was struck in 1989, Curtis Robb has won the European junior 800 metres title, a World Student Games silver medal and finished sixth in the Olympic Games in Barcelona. At 20, the odds against him succeeding in Atlanta are now shorter than the 500-1 which Robb senior accepted. He stands to win £100,000.

"I don't think the odds on Curtis will be bigger than 5-1 now," Sharpe said.

"It shows that this type of bet can come to fruition," Sharpe said. "In the last couple of years, I have gone out of my way to make people

aware they can have bets like these. But they are ticking time bombs waiting to explode on me in the next 20 years."

Other made-to-measure bets with Hills include £250 at 1,000-1 against a 13-year-old Surrey boy winning the world snooker championship before his 21st birthday and a similar bet on an Aberdeen girl winning an Olympic athletics medal by 2016.

The off-the-peg bet-of-the-year going into 1992 was on Linford Christie. Twelve months ago, he was 50-1 to win the Olympic 100 metres. Another which paid out was Lennox Lewis at 6-1 to hold one of the three heavyweight world

boxing titles in 1992. Punters must look elsewhere now: Christie is 5-2 to win the 1993 world championship, 100 metres and Lewis is 2-1 to become BBC sports personality of the year.

Where to look? "I would say the bargain bet for 1993 is either Party Politics at 25-1 to win the Grand National again or 33-1 on David Gower to captain England in a Test match," Sharpe said.

For novelty value, you can have 100-1 on a human winning the 1993 Man v Horse v Mountain Bike 22-mile race in Wales. "No one has ever got within four minutes of the winning horse," Sharpe said.

Punters seeking lower-risk investment before the new year can have Jimmy White at 3-1 to win the snooker world championship, and the same price on Essex to win

the county cricket championship. The England rugby team is 15-8 to achieve the grand slam. Andre Agassi is 5-1 to retain his Wimbledon title, Norwich City are 10-1 to win the Premier League. Manchester is 7-1 to stage the 2000 Olympics and Kevin Keegan is 10-1 to manage Liverpool.

Nick Faldo is 500-1 to complete the grand slam of all four golf majors in 1993 and, at the very bottom of the Hills published list of 1993 sporting chances ... well, wouldn't you know it? You can have 1,000-1 on a Brit winning Wimbledon.

Only 1,000-1? Makes little James Davison-Lungley's 10,000-1 seem a bargain by comparison. We know the present crop of British players are not up to it. The devil we don't know cannot be any worse. Pass the betting slip. And where can I buy James a headband for next Christmas?

RUGBY UNION

Leicester are hopeful they can beat the freeze

By DAVID HANDS AND ALAN LORIMER

IT MAY not be a white Christmas, but it is frosty one, and already some of the day's club programme has succumbed to the weather. Moseley's traditional clash with Coventry is off, and Northampton have cancelled their meeting with Shifnal County that was so successful last year.

However, Northampton have reason to be pleased with their burgeoning commercial programme, which has produced a new trophy for competition with Leicester, their long-standing rivals in the East Midlands: the two clubs meet in a first-division match on January 9 at Franklins Gardens, when the winner (league points apart) will receive the Carlsberg-Teddy Trophy.

The sponsoring company has been formed by the merger of Allied Lyons and Carlsberg; the former company owns Ansell's, the brewer that sponsors Leicester, while Carlsberg, famed for its lager, has a long relationship with Northampton.

Leicester, meanwhile, will hope the bad weather does nothing to affect their holiday fixture on Monday next — and Bath up against Clifton. Bristol give a newcomer, Andrew Cunningham, a debut at prop, while Will Wagstaff swaps his usual role at centre to play stand-off half.

Further west, today's prospects look better, with Bristol scheduled to entertain Newport — an Anglo-Welsh fixture seems a rarity these days — and Bath up against Clifton. Bristol give a newcomer, Andrew Cunningham, a debut at prop, while Will Wagstaff swaps his usual role at centre to play stand-off half.

Bath welcome two Oxford blues: Ashley Tapper played against Cambridge in 1991, but this will be his first senior appearance as stand-off for Bath. Audley Lumsden, however, is an old favourite at the Recreation Ground; Lumsden

played on Oxford's wing in the losing side at Twickenham earlier this month, but is in his favoured position of full back against Clifton.

Meanwhile, Dan Cottrell, who scored so many tries for Clifton last season, takes to the wing against them in a team including Darren Crompton, who played so well for the South and South West in the divisional championship this month.

Harlequins have deferred the return to action of David Pears until the new year, but play some of their promising under-21 players in the game against Richmond on Monday, alongside seniors such as Neil Edwards and Simon Dear. They have great hopes of such players as Simon Brown, 19, a loose-head prop, who may yet join the crop of promising youngsters in that position becoming available at divisional level and higher.

While most clubs in Scotland may be indulging in "friendlys", there will be little in the way of amiability at the Greenheads today, where Melrose and Jed-Forest play a crucial Bank of Scotland Border League match. Both sides have 100 per cent league records.

Craig Chalmers and Gary Armstrong, who will be together in the Scotland trial next Saturday, are in their respective teams but Melrose will be without Carl Hogg and Graham Shiel, who are in the Scotland A team to play Ireland A on Monday.

The other game in the Border League, between Kelso and Langholm, the third-division club, looks something of a mismatch and it seems only a matter of time before Langholm, beaten 63-0 by Gala last week, are dropped from what is the oldest surviving competition of its kind.

The big match in Edinburgh is at Myreside, where Watsonians and Heriot's FP stage a dress-rehearsal for their league meeting on January 9, when the McEwan's championship resumes.

CHRISTMAS 1991 was a giddy time for Cardiff. They stood two from the bottom of the Heineken League first division, and had just lost to their oldest rivals, Newport. When Pontypridd added further woe by winning the annual holiday fixture.

What a difference a year makes. Christmas 1992 sees Cardiff top of the table and entering the new year in rude health — a turnaround so complete as to suggest that the patient was not in such terminal decline. Even the Cardiff Athletic Club newsletter of last March suggested that "morale is currently at a low ebb", and it has taken a man named Evans to bring the blood surging back through the veins.

Alex Evans would deny that he alone is responsible for Cardiff's exalted position, but he has certainly been the catalyst for change. It was a radical step on Cardiff's part to invite an Australian to oversee their playing affairs, a radical step on Evans's part to accept, but changing the old order has been at the heart of the philosophy which has

helped restore Welsh rugby this season.

You could identify in Cardiff's decline the same symptoms that reduced Wales to also-rans: complacency was a significant factor, a refusal to accept responsibility, a breakdown in relationships between the playing and administrative sides of the game. But Evans, 52, stresses that he found the commercial side of the Cardiff club sound, and the talent, both for coaching and playing, available.

"It needed someone from outside to cast a fresh eye and maybe that was hard for a club with 135 years of proud history behind it to accept," he said. That it should have been Evans, a fifth-generation Welshman but Australian through and through, who took up the challenge is even more intriguing: two years ago the former Queensland player nearly died from a rare blood disorder which still requires constant monitoring.

"I was lucky to have wonderful support from my family in Brisbane," he said. "The greatest therapy I had was to coach my old club, Souths." To such effect that, before Evans joined Cardiff, Souths won every grade competition in Brisbane.

His 20-year coaching involvement has brought him shoulder-to-shoulder with some of the most influential coaches in Australia: with Bob Templeton in Queensland, Dick Marks and David Clarke, who are now key figures with the Australian Rugby Union and the Australian Institute of Sport, and Alan Jones, whom he assisted with the national side between 1984 and 1987.

Evans has had longer to establish himself and his style of coaching at Slough. A former paratrooper and an Army physical training instructor, he insists on a commitment to winning and to fitness.

"I also coached rowing, he coached tennis, and our philosophy was similar: to pick the athlete and make him a rugby player. The best exam-

ple of that at Cardiff is Nigel Walker [the former international hurdler who has now broken into the Welsh training squad]. But there are others who don't yet realise their athletic ability.

"One of the problems with Welsh rugby was that they were selecting from good players but not competing in a physical sense. What we tried to do — and Alan Davies tries to do the same with Wales — was to develop the athlete.

"The Cardiff team now has incredible speed in the backs, and some of the forwards are realising their potential. All the players are striving to be elitist, and they should not be ashamed of that: they are all attempting to play for Wales." Having pared down an oversized squad of 75, Evans now has a group of players with confidence in themselves, in each other, and in the structure in which they are playing.

"The players realise they have a responsibility not only to themselves but to their city," Evans said. "There is a

cycle in club rugby, and it can be traumatic when a club with a long history of major achievement takes itself for granted and starts to go down.

"At the start of the season, we didn't set targets, but took it week by week, selecting on that basis, too. I knew the players would improve, but I didn't know their potential for development. Once that started, then the results followed after themselves, and when you have people like Terry Holmes and Charlie Faulkner on the coaching staff, they are easily able to express their competitive desire to people who are hungry for the same."

The bare figures tell the story: Cardiff have lost only one league match, and in the Sualec Cup last weekend they disposed of Maesteg by a margin of 52 points.

No wonder Cardiff are anxious for Evans to extend his stay beyond this season. Negotiations are in hand, and a three-year contract is a possibility, but the club is putting no pressure on Evans: they have faith in his ability to make the right decisions.

SKIING

Girardelli in prime shape for new year

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

MARC Girardelli is on course to win a record fifth overall World Cup title in the new year. As the skiers enjoyed a Christmas holiday before resuming in Germany at Garmissch-Partenkirchen on January 9, Girardelli, the Austrian-born all-rounder, leads the championship with 387 points to Alberto Tomba's 372.

Tomba, of Italy, has now completed half his events — he does not race downhill and is unlikely to risk super-giant slaloms before the world championships in Japan in February — while Girardelli has much to look forward to.

"This season has started really well," Girardelli said. "I feel strong now in three events. I just have to work more on my slalom. I need more time and more training in that — I will ski more during the Christmas break."

Girardelli's title ambitions have undoubtedly been helped by the relatively modest form of Tomba and the present World Cup champion, Paul Accola, of Switzerland. Tomba and Accola have won nothing yet this season after dominating 1991-2.

The places on the top of the podium have been taken instead by emerging talents and others in a hurry to make up for lost time.

There have been exceptions — Leonhard Stock, of Austria, in the twilight of his career, won a downhill at Val Gardena, Italy, and came second in the super-giant slalom in Bad Kleinkirchheim.

William Besse, of Switzerland, who failed to qualify for the Olympics, has won one downhill and come second in another already this season. Armin Assinger, of Austria, another who failed to get to Albertville, won a super-giant slalom on Tuesday, the first win of a career almost ended by injury in 1989. Fabrizio Tesari, of Italy, pulled off a surprise win, his first, in a slalom in Sestriere, Italy, in November.

On form, the main challenge to Girardelli for the overall title looks like coming from Norway. The Olympic super-giant slalom champion, Kjetil Andre Aamodt, who also competes in all disciplines, is third overall on 258 points.

CYCLING

Sturges starts amateur career all over again

By PETER BRYAN

THE Christmas post brought Colin Sturges, world 5,000 metres pursuit champion in his first year as a professional in 1989, the news he wanted. He will be reinstated as an amateur on January 1.

He is one of four professionals to take advantage of the British Cycling Federation's (BCF) offer of reinstatement. Previously, a professional had to wait 12 months before being allowed back into amateur competition.

But, influenced by difficulties that home-based professionals are having obtaining new contracts, the BCF decided that anybody applying before December 1 would be reinstated on January 1.

Sturges, 24, from Leicester, was national amateur pursuit champion in 1987 and 1988 after returning to Britain from a childhood spent in South Africa, where he won junior



Looking ahead: Evans, the catalyst for change at Cardiff, is negotiating to extend his stay with the Heineken League leaders

Evans inspires Cardiff's re-emergence

David Hands, rugby correspondent, on the Australian who has restored Welsh pride

While most clubs in Scotland may be indulging in "friendlys", there will be little in the way of amiability at the Greenheads today, where Melrose and Jed-Forest play a crucial Bank of Scotland Border League match. Both sides have 100 per cent league records.

Craig Chalmers and Gary Armstrong, who will be together in the Scotland trial next Saturday, are in their respective teams but Melrose will be without Carl Hogg and Graham Shiel, who are in the Scotland A team to play Ireland A on Monday.

The other game in the Border League, between Kelso and Langholm, the third-division club, looks something of a mismatch and it seems only a matter of time before Langholm, beaten 63-0 by Gala last week, are dropped from what is the oldest surviving competition of its kind.

The big match in Edinburgh is at Myreside, where Watsonians and Heriot's FP stage a dress-rehearsal for their league meeting on January 9, when the McEwan's championship resumes.

Alex Evans would deny that he alone is responsible for Cardiff's exalted position, but he has certainly been the catalyst for change. It was a radical step on Cardiff's part to invite an Australian to oversee their playing affairs, a radical step on Evans's part to accept, but changing the old order has been at the heart of the philosophy which has

HOCKEY: LEADING NATIONAL LEAGUE TEAMS REAP REWARDS OF FRESH APPROACH TO COACHING

Men set a trend in women's game

By ALIX RAMSAY

while the men don't expect to be told exactly what to do."

Barrie Mullins has found the same problems at Sutton Coldfield and has tried to encourage his players to think for themselves on the pitch.

"Throughout the junior and senior set-up, the women are too dogmatic in their approach," he said. Although Mullins would rather think of himself as a player than a coach, he does admit to having made his mark at Sutton. "I think I have introduced a more professional approach in the side. We still need to work on small things, like being aware of all the options and going for the percentage play and that goes back to the problem of flexibility."

Mullins is hoping Ipswich will show the true benefits of his new ideas next season. "What we are working to achieve is adaptive hockey, we have to have the ability to change and not keep doing the same thing every time," he said.

It is in this area that Jennings feels the All England Women's Hockey Association

is letting the younger players down. In his view, the established coaching methods are training the flair out of players, which will eventually be reflected in international results.

Dunkley, too, is worried about the development of the women's game. "The first and second teams both play on a Saturday, so some of our young England Under-18s spend every week on the subs bench because they are not experienced enough to start the league games and yet there is no second XI match for them to play in. It's no good for them and it's no good for developing the international game."

But the three men are not claiming to be the ultimate answer to the ills of women's hockey. As Mullins puts it: "I hope the women's game will change but I don't want to say the men's game has all the answers — that's ludicrous. I'd be the first to admit there are aspects of both that are good."

The game is not to be played on the club's grass pitch but in case of bad weather an artificial pitch is available within a short distance.

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Club

Simon Barnes looks back at a dramatic, emotional year of sport and selects his highlights

Meyer captures the dignified spirit of sport

It is not hard to get jaded. Listen to the gossip in a thousand press-boxes at a thousand sporting events, from the highest to the lowest level.

Wimbledon: let's get it finished in three sets so we can all go home. World Cup: pray he misses the penalty so we can avoid extra-time. Olympics: let's hope the Brit gets beat because that means six pars and straight to the bar.

All professions have their moments of soul-weariness. When you are watching your twentieth game of a World Cup campaign (800 words on the whistle, please), you know that it is going to take something quite exceptional if you are to cast aside professional cares and exult in pure sport — to re-acquaint yourself with that exultation that brought you into sport in the first place.

But they come, these moments, they come. Usually when least expected. Often you are at an event savouring the professional challenge rather than pure sporting delight — and bang. Suddenly, the machine has switched into Infinite Improbability Drive. The relevance of this concept, borrowed from Douglas Adams's *The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, occurred to me while watching John McEnroe at Wimbledon this summer.

There are moments when sport destroys the boundaries of normality. All normal rules are suspended. People perform far above their physical potential — far beyond, it seems the normal rules of physics and biology.

"Please do not be alarmed... We are now cruising at a level of two to the power of 25,000 to one against and falling and we will be restoring normality just as soon as we are sure what is normal anyway. Thank you."

As I look back over another sporting year, I look back for those moments when sport applied the Infinite Improbability Drive, where it rains whales and custard, the monkeys type the complete works of William Shakespeare, Andre Agassi wins Wimbledon and Linford Christie picks up the greatest prize in sport.

These are the moments of self-forgetfulness those moments that cause drink-spilling in a thousand living-rooms, warmth to invade the coldest terraces and which make the most cynical hack in the box clench a fist and mutter a cheer.

Last year, Agassi was my sporting Eejit of the Year. This year, he is close to being the hero. This was not for his performance in the final, but for an extraordinary evening in the Wimbledon gloaming.

Agassi was playing Becker, Becker's place, Becker's surface. Power tennis ruled. Serve-and-volley was out of fashion: this year, we had only serve-and-miss.

Well, Becker served and Agassi missed and it was clear that this was to be a three-set annihilation of the poseur (600 words and get to the bar). Agassi was wiped out in the first set. All was predictable, impressive, but not exactly magical. And then it happened. Every line of Agassi's body, every gesture, every shot, spelt out the fact — Agassi had given the match up and thought, well, I may as well go down gloriously. And so he came out into the second set with guns blazing.

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Realising the Olympian ideal: Tuju, left, and Meyer break down the political barriers during their lap of honour in Barcelona

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Mansell's ferocious driving has something special too — even if the finest moment occurred when he apparently "brake-tested" Senna and got rammed up the back-side.

But inevitably, it is the Olympic Games that dominate the memories. Olympic City — wherever it happens to be — is like nowhere else on earth. It is the town of a thousand improbabilities — two to the power of 25,000 to one against and rising — and the place where a thousand life-and-death struggles take place every waking hour of the day.

You can move from event to event and everywhere you look you see someone living out the most important single moment of his or her life. The Olympics command the world's attention through television: but television can only look through the keyhole, generally with jingoistic glasses.

Great moments? Well, I feel this is a bit like trying to pick out the best notes in a symphony. But there were plenty of moments of sublime improbability.

There was Ian Stark's cross country on the great grey Murphy Himself. After the Brits had made a tactical nonsense of the three-day event, Stark rode his damnedest in

The Olympics are a hundred times the size, and a hundred times as mesmerising, when you are there on the floor.

I felt this everywhere: during a bemused visit to the Greco-Roman

wrestling, at a visit to the bemused Angola basketball team as they played the obnoxious American Dream Team ("I don't know much about Angola, but I know Angola is in trouble" — Sir Charles Barkley) and on a visit to the women's hockey, in which the Brits were defeated by a 17-year-old Gazzetta fan.

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It was, as ever, the track and field

that provided the most vivid mem-

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ing run for the line, a man who

saw his chance and who went for it

with everything he possessed.

There was Sally Gunnell among

the lavishly lip-glossed athletes of

America. I remember her expres-

sion afterwards: victory does some-

thing to a face that no amount of

lip-gloss can rival.

There were the Kenyans, with

their glorious clean-sweep in the

steeplechase. There was the extraordi-

nary finish to the women's mara-

thon, where Valentina Yegorova had

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Arimori, of Japan, duelled every

yard of that cruel baking hill to the

stadium. They finished in that

order and collapsed in tears into

each others' arms. There was Hassiba Boulmerka, who mussed

her way to a victory that will

be treasured by Muslim women all

a doomed attempt to repair the damage. "I can't think of anything that feels better than jumping fence 13," he said. "Except maybe sex." I loved that maybe.

I delighted in Svetlana Boginskaya, the last woman left in

women's gymnastics, and her doomed attempt to substitute grace for the power-tumbling of the pixies. I loved the Scarle brothers' last-gasp win something that was heard rather than seen. The event was relayed to me through several walls by my up-with-the-lark colleague, John Goodbody, who shouted the boys home in front of the television at *The Times Olympic Mission*, walking me from my slumbers after a protracted evening on the *Ramblas*, one of the great

streets of Europe.

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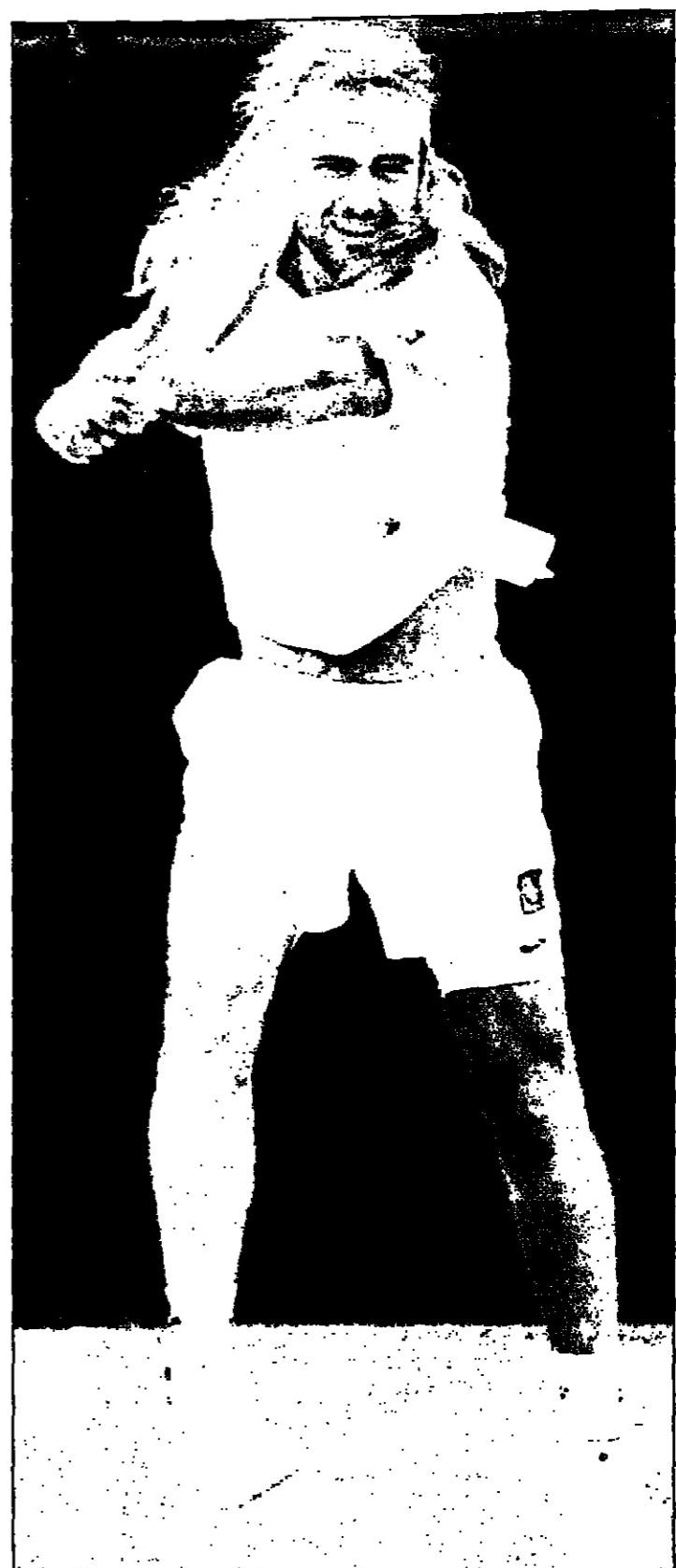
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Sporting hero: Agassi came close to tennis perfection

over the world.

But, in the end, I find myself turning to, of all people, a white South African for the year's hero.

Step forward, Elana Meyer, silver medal-winner in the 10,000 metres. This was the race Liz McColgan was supposed to win.

But McColgan was busted when Meyer had the courage to break the entire field. Meyer had the nerve, the strength and resolution to stay in front. But she had the chagrin of being taken on the last lap: by Debutant Tuju, of Ethiopia.

Meyer at once congratulated the winner and even ran a lap of honour with her. And she carried an Olympic flag, not the tricolour of

apartheid, and thereby became the first flag-flapper of the Games to do the deed with dignity. And afterwards, she said: "We did it for Africa."

Africa! I spent a two-month sabbatical in Africa, waiting for rain during a terrible drought. To be sure, an Olympic medal does make everything in Africa. All Right: but even in the impossible problems that proliferate the length and breadth of the great continent, a sweaty night in Barcelona demonstrated to the world that there is a spark of hope. In the continent of Infinite Improbability, it sometimes seems that hope is the most improbable, and the most precious, thing of all.

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Doumen relishing the chance to do battle again



Francois Doumen has never been afraid to take on the British, whether at Kempton Ascot, Cheltenham or Margate and Sheerness.

The Kent seaside towns provided France's top jumps trainer with a taste of a not so cordial entente when he was there as a teenager more than 35 years ago. "I came over on a couple of summer holiday trips involving family swaps, to Sheerness and Margate. We had endless fights with the Teedie Boys."

"Our French boys had to defend ourselves because they were using chains and everything — just because we were pinching their girlfriends," he recalled, with a twinkle in his eye.

This afternoon at Kempton, the still glamorous-looking Doumen continues a more peaceful love affair with the British when he

runs The Fellow in the King George VI Chase, which he won last year.

Five Christmases have passed since Kempton's Boxing Day faithful were stunned into silence by a long-shot, trained by an unknown Frenchman who had the temerity to beat their beloved Desert Orchid in the feature race. Nupsala's 25-1 victory continued Doumen's ability to surprise.

He was born in 1940 "on the road," as he puts it, during the German invasion. His mother had been sent south by her husband and Doumen minor chose a spot in the Dordogne to enter the world.

Although his father trained horses at Maisons-Laffitte and Francois rode as an amateur jockey for 20 years, fate did its best to prevent him from following in his father's footsteps.

Richard Evans finds France's top National Hunt trainer in confident mood as he seeks a third King George VI Chase victory at Kempton today

After spending two years at a veterinary school, he became assistant to his father, somewhat reluctantly. "He was a very difficult man I could not get on with so I pushed off to South Africa in 1970."

Apart from playing a lot of polo, Doumen set up a highly successful fashion import business in Johannesburg and married Elizabeth.

"My father had a heart attack quite suddenly and he wanted me back. I came back in 1977 and took over where he left off. When he felt better, he sacked me, so I moved to Chantilly."

Success was not slow in coming

on the Flat and over the jumps, but his decision to cross the Channel in search of National Hunt glory owes much to chance, and Oliver Sherwood.

"Nupsala was a horse who hated heavy ground. After October I could not take him to Auteuil because it was too soft. At that stage Oliver Sherwood came over here, possibly to buy Nupsala before the King George."

"The deal didn't go through but I explained to Oliver the difficulty about getting decent ground for Nupsala. He said if I went to Kempton, it would be good ground, even if it rained. He

virtually guaranteed me good ground."

"Nupsala was unexploited in France because of the lack of good ground, so I took him to Kempton and you know the result. When you start like that, you are keen to come back. It is all Oliver's fault if I beat you again," he joked.

As he supervises the 60 horses stabled at Lamorlaye and a few more resting on his farm in Normandy, Doumen follows a distinctive home-spun philosophy.

"Any horse should be happy in his head, so they can't be forced to do anything. Secondly, because they are athletes, I try to have them out of their boxes for the maximum amount of time."

The Fellow, in common with other future runners, goes out for exercise twice in the morning and

is led or ridden for 45 minutes in the evening. "That may mean they manage to be out of their boxes for three hours a day. It is not easy to achieve, because it costs money, but it is important."

As we chatted near one of Lamorlaye's tree-lined gallops, The Fellow moved into view with a group of Doumen's two-year-olds. "Look how supple and relaxed he is," Doumen said. "He bounces like a rubber ball."

It seems hard to believe The Fellow is only seven. He was third in the King George as a five-year-old, and has been beaten a short head in each of the last two runnings of the Gold Cup. But the best could still be to come.

"This year has been one of enormous improvement," Doumen said. "He has settled down a bit more and I am sure he has yet to reach his prime."

Pressure to attack for sake of Test cricket's future

Richardson may opt for greater variety

Melbourne: West Indies may gamble by playing only three fast bowlers when the second Test match against Australia begins today at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Richie Richardson, the West Indies captain, said yesterday he would make a decision minutes before the start of play. "We'll wait because I'm sure they still have some work to do on the pitch," Richardson said.

Richardson is considering playing only Ian Bishop, Courtney Walsh and either Patrick Patterson or Courtney Walsh. He would rely on the medium-paced bowling of Phil Simmons and the off spin of Carl Hooper for extra variety.

West Indies are suffering from lack of match practice after a four-day match against Victoria in Bendigo was washed out. "The preparation we've had is not what we would like, but we can't do anything about it," Richardson said. "We have to make the best of what we have got and I firmly believe we are good enough to beat Australia."

The Australia captain, Allan Border, said his team was confident after drawing the first Test in Brisbane. "I would have thought we came out with a points decision from Brisbane," Border said.

"We outplayed them on the last day and we were the only team that could win it after lunch. Every Test match in Melbourne, though, is a toss of the coin. You rarely get two wickets the same and it's always a bit of a guessing game as to what to do." (AP)

South Africa must take much more positive approach

FROM RICHARD STREETON IN PORT ELIZABETH

SOUTH Africa and India have the additional onus of trying to ensure the five-day game's future in this country when the third Test match starts here today. All the usual, inherent pressures will be there but the players must also make certain that it remains a competitive match to the end.

Only then might the public be persuaded that Test cricket can be worthwhile. After 22 years' isolation from Test match play, South African spectators have become more indoctrinated than anywhere else in the world to one-day games and their instant but repetitive pattern.

It would be altruistic to expect either side to take excessive risks. Any repetition, however, of the tame finish to the second Test match in Johannesburg last month would be damaging. On the final day both captains settled for a draw to spoil what had been a fluctuating match.

Rain caused the first Test in Durban to be drawn and two inconclusive games have been reflected by dismal ticket sales for this Test and the fourth at Cape Town over new year.

Wessels, the South Africa captain, has acknowledged openly that he has to adopt a more positive policy. He has the comforting knowledge that South Africa entered this Test brimming with confidence after a dominant 5-2 success in the limited-overs series. Injuries deprived South Africa



Azharuddin: under fire

Azharuddin has said he will review his position as captain after the fourth and final Test.

"The captain can only be as good as his players make him to be, but he is always held responsible when things go wrong," Azharuddin was reported to have said yesterday.

"There is moral accountability and I will have to take a decision about this in Cape Town."

It should help the Indians here, though, that the pitch at St George's Park these days has a reputation for being slow and low, with a tendency to become worn. In spite of an appealing away record — India have gone 23 Tests without a win outside their own country — there is a new, determined mood in the touring team. It has been fuelled not least by unfriendly criticism of their performances from home.

Neither side has announced its team but the grapevine has it that, for the first time, the Indians intend to include three spin bowlers with the left-arm Raju joining Kumble and Shastri. South Africans have little experience against the turning ball and this would be an attacking move by India.

South Africa, too, have hinted they are striking out for a definite result, with Henry, the left-arm spinner, certain to play as a fifth bowler and Pringle likely to be the fast bowler omitted. Cronje or Cullinan, the new cap, vie for the last batting place.

SOUTH AFRICA (from): K.C. Wessels (capt), A.C. Hudson, P.N. Kirsten, J.N. Botha, G. Botha, S. Botha, M. Botha, D.J. Richardson, O. Henry, B.R. Matthews, M.W. Pringle, A.A. Donald, B.N. Schutte.

INDIA (from): M. Azharuddin (capt), R.J. Singh, W. Raman, S.V. Manjunath, R. Tendulkar, P.K. Arora, Kapil Dev, K.S. Manohar, M. Prabhakar, A.R. Kumble, S.L.V. Ravi, J. Srinivasan, D.R. Shepherd (Eng), R.E. Kiran and W. Diederick (SA).

ICC match referee: M.J.K. Smith (Eng).

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Pakistani will unleash fierce Waqar

Wellington: Waqar Younis, the fast bowler, is poised to pose the biggest threat to New Zealand in the Pakistan tour which begins today. Ramiz Raja, the Pakistan vice-captain, predicted yesterday, Waqar, 21, is making his first visit to New Zealand after missing the World Cup earlier this year because of injury.

Ramiz said he believed conditions in New Zealand will suit Waqar better than those in Australia. "New Zealand wickets will suit him a lot, because there is not as much bounce here as Australia," Ramiz said. "They are ideal wickets for Waqar because he basically likes to bowl a fuller length ball and he gets a lot of lbw decisions. He wasn't getting them in Australia because they were hitting a little bit higher."

Ramiz believes New Zealand crowds will appreciate Waqar's ability. The young fast bowler forms world cricket's most feared new-ball attack with left-armer Wasim Akram. "Waqar is a fierce competitor and I think New Zealanders will find it great watching him," Ramiz said.

The opening one-day international of the series is being played here today. It will be followed by games in Napier on Monday and Auckland on Wednesday. The lone Test match will be at Hamilton from January 2 to 6. (AP)

WORTHINGTON BEST BITTER 485ml CANS

This announcement only relates to Worthington Best Bitter cans of the new 485ml size with Best Before dates on the base earlier than 27th June 1993.

There is a very slight risk that due to early manufacturing faults, small, loose pieces of plastic may be present in such cans.

As a precautionary measure, please take all such cans back to the shop from which they were bought for a full refund.

For further information please phone:

0800 272027 (Freephone)



Service industry: Scullard goes through his paces during the Cellnet tournament

Tennis hopefuls slug it out in pursuit of a net profit

BY ALIX RAMSAY

IN LESS than three weeks, the tennis money-go-round will start up again for 1993 with the Australian Open. On offer will be a fat pay-cheque and, for the winner, a host of endorsement contracts. As the top players get younger, so their earning potential grows.

Edberg, Becker and Courier are in their early or middle 20s, and yet they have earned more than \$25 million between them.

But at the bottom of the tennis ladder, life is a little different. Before Christmas a group of British hopefuls were playing in the Cellnet singles challenge in Basingstoke in the hope of winning the £1,000 prize, a generous reward in British tennis terms.

As only the lucky few have a sponsor, the money is all important.

"It's like a fresh start at the age of 24," Paul Scullard said. For the first time since he began playing tennis at the age of 11 he has found a

traveler to help cover his travel and tournament expenses. The deal gives him the freedom to take time off from his coaching job and play more tournaments, gaining experience, and with luck and hard work, ranking points to launch his career.

Like most aspiring players, Scullard is caught in the tennis world's Catch 22. Tennis is lucrative at the top level, but to get there he must play more tournaments to gain a ranking.

Playing tournaments costs money, so to earn the cash he is a coach, which leaves him little time to focus on his own game.

Even the youngest players at Basingstoke realize the true cost of starting out on the professional circuit. "That can cost £2,000-£3,000 for a four-week series," he said. "There are a lot of big-money tournaments to play, but you need ranking points to get in."

However, despite the financial costs nobody shows any sign of giving up the struggle. "I love tennis. I love teaching it," Scullard said. "I wouldn't have any other job."



Hopeful trio: Scullard, left, Gaterell and Wyeth discuss the way ahead

GYMNASTICS

Coaches planning a route to Atlanta

BY PETER AVROYD

THE British Amateur Gymnastic Association will start preparations for the 1996 Olympic Games with a symposium for leading coaches at Lilleshall National Sports Centre on January 8. Methods of selection and programmes of training will be discussed so that the most talented gymnasts can be picked well in advance and conditioned to reach peak form in time for Atlanta.

Both men and women will have a harder struggle than ever for Olympic success. While the men's team qualified for Barcelona last year by joining the elite top 12 countries, experienced seniors such as Terry Bartlett and James May will have retired by 1996.

The British women are presently ranked seventeenth and their new Romanian national coach, Adrian Stan, has the initial objective of upgrading their position by at least two places before considering Olympic qualification.

At the same time, new countries such as Belarus, Ukraine and Russia will swell the numbers of leading competitive nations, effectively pushing countries such as Britain further down the world league table.

Trials for the world championships at Birmingham in April have been announced. For men, they are the London Open at Harrow on February 14, with the finals at Crawley on March 7. Women will be selected first at Lilleshall on January 23 and then after the match against Bulgaria at Liverpool on January 29.

At Birmingham, gymnasts will compete for individual overall and individual apparatus medals.

FOR THE RECORD

ATHLETICS

NEWTON AYCLIFFE: Lampight five-mile race (Newton Aycliffe) 1, P. Cuskin (2nd); 12,225, 2, G. Naylor (Val); 24,221, 3, P. Kelly (Middlesbrough); 35, Venables; 5, White (Blyth); 26,402, Women: 1, S. Gibbard (Leeds City); 28,58, 2, N. Brown (Sheffield); 29,58, 3, P. Jones (Chester-le-Street); 30,29.

LAURISTON RUNNERS CLUB'S 3-mile race (Lauriston Village): 1, M. Black (Bolton); 2, Steve Dyer (Preston); 6, miles 789 yds, 2, J. Gladwin (Preston); and R. Hull (Hercules, Wimborne); 6, 2nd; 3, M. McBride (Salisbury) and S. Bell (Bognor), 6m 29yds.

RUGBY UNION

18-GROUP MATCH: Middlesex 11, Surrey 3.

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Wednesday Boston Celtics 98, Houston Rockets 94; Charlotte Hornets 107, Detroit Pistons 95; Cleveland Cavaliers 118, Indiana Pacers 102; Sacramento Kings 102, Dallas Mavericks 97; 2, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 1

The Fellow for Kempton encore

THE Fellow can justify his position as a short-priced favourite in the King George VI Chase at Kempton this afternoon. He is my man.

A year ago, The Fellow came to Kempton as a 10-1 chance, but belied those odds with a decisive success. His irresistible rise over the last two seasons fully vindicates the place he now occupies at the head of the betting market.

Aside from beating Docklands Express by a length and a half here, he has twice been a short-head second in the Gold Cup, first to Garrison Savannah and then to Cool Ground.

Despite those fine efforts at Cheltenham, he is probably better suited by this two furlongs shorter trip and less demanding finish.

This season, after two wins victories at Auteuil, he was a creditable third under 11st 13lb in the Hennessy Gold Cup at Newbury last month, despite finding the ground softer than he likes.

François Doumen, The Fel-

MANDARIN

low's trainer, is exuding confidence and with his charge's fast ground in his favour, he is undoubtedly the one to beat.

Given The Fellow's cramp-

ed to look for some each-way.

Bradbury Star, runner-up to Minnehaha in last

year's Sun Alliance Chase at

Cheltenham, is second favourite, but his two and a half lengths third to Deep Sensation (received 12lb) at Ascot last time is not conclusive proof that he can negotiate this step up in grade.

Docklands Express, who has more than once demonstrated his ability at this level, could be a better proposition.

Following his second in the race last year, he added a third, a length behind The Fellow, in the Gold Cup, and a reproduction of that level of form would make him the main danger here.

Kim Bailey's booking of Peter Scudamore, the champion jockey, provoked plenty of ante-post interest in stable companion Kings Fountain, but his most important success in a conditions race, the Martell Chase at Auteuil last April, was gained only at the expense of clear leader Arctic Call's last-fence fall.

Tipping Tim has been in excellent form this season but, aside from moving up in class, could find the drying ground against him.

With Cab On Target an absentee, the Tripleprint Feltah Novices Chase should rest between Barton Bank and Forest Sun, who meet for the third time this season.

At Cheltenham earlier this month, their confrontation was robbed of its significance when Forest Sun fell three fences out, leaving Barton Bank to come home clear of Young Hustler.

What might have happened can only be guesswork, but Barton Bank had earlier beaten

en Forest Sun by 12 lengths at Worcester and is again taken to get the better of his old rival.

Qualia Sound has The Ladbroke next month on his agenda but can collect a good prize en route in the Bonmills Handicap Hurdle.

He was returning from a two-month absence when winning a competitive handicap

at Doncaster by five lengths earlier this month and can improve further for that run.

Satin Lover goes from

strength to strength and can complete a five-fitter in the Bonmills Novices' Hurdle while Bishop's Island, whose easy win at Uttoxeter last time suggested he is getting the hang of jumping fences, can continue his progress in the Bonmills Novices' Chase.

Jenny Pitman's decision to run The Ilywhacker in the King George should leave the way clear for Millord Quay in the Mid Season Chase, the principal race at Wincanton. Millord Quay fell when holding every chance in the Tripleprint Gold Cup at Cheltenham and would have more to do if this were a handicap.

Setter Country's attempt at a treble was denied by a third to Cyphurite at Ascot last time, but was still a respectable effort in a good race. She can resume winning ways in the Boxing Day Handicap Chase.

Bailey, double-handed in King George

KEMPTON PARK

MANDARIN		THUNDERER	
12.45 Satin Lover.		12.45 Satin Lover.	
1.15 Barton Bank.		1.15 Barton Bank.	
1.45 Qualia Sound.		1.45 KAHER (nap).	
2.20 THE FELLOW (nap).		2.20 The Fellow.	
2.50 Bishops Island.		2.50 Bishops Island.	
3.20 Petroski.		3.20 Top Javelin.	

RICHARD EVANS: 2.20 The Fellow, 2.50 Dusty Miller.

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 2.20 THE FELLOW.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT

SIS

12.45 BONUSPHOTO NOVICES HURDLE

(C4, 435; 2m) (11 runners)		P Holley
101 30F-11 BEAT STAR (2) (P) (Richards) D Growth 4-11-5		
102 111-11 SATIN LOVER (2) (D) (Holt) N Tinkler 4-1-3		
103 40-11 BARTON BANK (2) (P) (McCourt) S Scudamore 5-1-10		
104 40-11 FAIRY TALE (2) (P) (Hollinshead) N Hennig 4-1-11		
105 V-14 GAMOUKE GLASS (2) (S) (S) (Ebdon) J Gobert 5-1-10		
106 5-15 JAZZON DANCER (2) (P) (Faulkner) P Wilson 4-1-10		
107 2-1 PLAY GAMES (2) (P) (Ebdon) Lady Eliza May-Smith 4-1-11		
108 10-12 TEAM TYCOON (2) (P) (Faulkner) R Abrahams 4-1-12		
109 60225-2 VAULT NOVOS (2) (Smith) R Abrahams 5-1-10		
110 111-11 VAULT NOVOS (2) (Smith) R Abrahams 5-1-10		
111 4-11 SUPER 748 (2) (M) (Wilson) N Twiston-Davies 10-10		

BETTING: 4-5 Satin Lover, 5-1 Russell Colby, 6-1 Big Beat, 6-1 Fast, 10-1 Barford Lad, 12-1 Sandgate Star, 14-1 Valiant Words, 16-1 others.

1991: TRAVADO 5-1-10 R Dunwoody (2-2) M Henderson 13 cm

FORM FOCUS

BONUSPHOTO NOVICES HURDLE		C4
101 30F-11 BEAT STAR (2) (P) (Richards) D Growth 4-11-5	P Holley	82
102 111-11 SATIN LOVER (2) (D) (Holt) N Tinkler 4-1-3	B McCourt	82
103 40-11 BARTON BANK (2) (P) (McCourt) S Scudamore 5-1-10	R Hennig	82
104 40-11 FAIRY TALE (2) (P) (Hollinshead) N Hennig 4-1-11	N Hennig	82
105 V-14 GAMOUKE GLASS (2) (S) (S) (Ebdon) J Gobert 5-1-10	P Holley	82
106 5-15 JAZZON DANCER (2) (P) (Faulkner) P Wilson 4-1-10	D Faulkner	82
107 2-1 PLAY GAMES (2) (P) (Ebdon) Lady Eliza May-Smith 4-1-11	A Ebdon	82
108 10-12 TEAM TYCOON (2) (P) (Faulkner) R Abrahams 4-1-12	R Abrahams	82
109 60225-2 VAULT NOVOS (2) (Smith) R Abrahams 5-1-10	R Abrahams	82
110 111-11 VAULT NOVOS (2) (Smith) R Abrahams 5-1-10	R Abrahams	82
111 4-11 SUPER 748 (2) (M) (Wilson) N Twiston-Davies 10-10	N Twiston-Davies	82

1991: SATIN LOVER, 5-1 Russell Colby, 6-1 Big Beat, 6-1 Fast, 10-1 Barford Lad, 12-1 Sandgate Star, 14-1 Valiant Words, 16-1 others.

1991: TRAVADO 5-1-10 R Dunwoody (2-2) M Henderson 13 cm

FORM FOCUS

TRIPLEPRINT FELTHAM NOVICES CHASE		C4
101 1249-11 ARDCRONE CHIEF (2) (M) (D) (G) Gobert 5-1-10	G McCourt	73
102 205-11 BARTON BANK (2) (P) (McCourt) S Scudamore 5-1-10	R Hennig	73
103 223-11 FAIRY TALE (2) (P) (Hollinshead) N Hennig 4-1-11	M Rutter	73
104 40-11 GAMOUKE GLASS (2) (S) (S) (Ebdon) J Gobert 5-1-10	N Hennig	73
105 144-111 DAKINS BOY (2) (P) (Faulkner) P Wilson 4-1-10	P Scudamore	84
106 111-11 FAIRY TALE (2) (P) (Hollinshead) N Hennig 4-1-11	R Hennig	84
107 2-1 PLAY GAMES (2) (P) (Ebdon) Lady Eliza May-Smith 4-1-11	A Ebdon	84
108 10-12 TEAM TYCOON (2) (P) (Faulkner) R Abrahams 4-1-12	R Abrahams	84
109 60225-2 VAULT NOVOS (2) (Smith) R Abrahams 5-1-10	R Abrahams	84
110 111-11 VAULT NOVOS (2) (Smith) R Abrahams 5-1-10	R Abrahams	84

BETTING: 4-5 Barton Bank, 5-4 Forest Sun, 7-2 Derbyshire Star, 14-1 Andover Chieftain, 15-1 Christmas.

FORM FOCUS

COURSE SPECIALISTS		C4
TRAINERS Wins %	JOCKEYS Wins %	Rides %
T Thompson Jones 8 19 42.1	A Tolley 3 2 66.7	100
N Tinkler 10 24 42.9	B McCourt 22 51 52.0	100
S Scudamore 18 24 50.0	P Scudamore 13 25 50.0	100
S Shewell 3 12 25.0	M Pinner 6 16 33.3	100
G Haywood 17 47 23.4	M McCourt 10 24 41.7	100
M Pipe 11 47 23.4	M Pinner 8 17 44.4	100

1991: MANDARIN, 3-1 Gobert 4-1, 5-1 Distillate, 7-1 Tinkler 8-1, 10-1 Scudamore 11-1, 12-1.

FORM FOCUS

KEMPTON PARK		C4
MANDARIN		
12.45 Satin Lover.	12.45 Satin Lover.	
1.15 Barton Bank.	1.15 Barton Bank.	
1.45 Qualia Sound.	1.45 KAHER (nap).	
2.20 THE FELLOW (nap).	2.20 The Fellow.	
2.50 Bishops Island.	2.50 Bishops Island.	
3.20 Petroski.	3.20 Top Javelin.	

RICHARD EVANS: 12.45 Satin Lover.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT (SOFT IN PLACES)

SIS

1991: THE FELLOW (nap)

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Portfolio Plus

From your Portfolio Plus card check your eight share price movements on this page only. Add them up to give you your overall total and check that against the daily dividend figure. If it's higher than you've won outright or a share of the daily price has increased, if you win, follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. Always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No	Company	Group	Gains or Losses
1	Britannic Insurance		
2	Epwin Building Rds		
3	TST Leisure		
4	Weppex Banks/Disc		
5	Wans Blake Building Rds		
6	Swed Burrell Insurance		
7	Lloyd Thompson Insurance		
8	Wessex Water Water		
9	Hazelwood Fds Foods		
10	Enterprise Oil Gas		
11	Forval Chem. Plus		
12	Bristol Newspaper/Pub		
13	Midlands Elec Electricity		
14	Bredon PLC Building Rds		
15	Wartberg SG Banks/Disc		
16	Headline Newspap./Pub		
17	Allied Loss Property		
18	Low Silver Foods		
19	Smith David Paper/Print		
20	Norwest Electricity		
21	LASMO Oil/Gas		
22	Bridon Industrial		
23	Yorkshire Water Water		
24	Carmel Petrol. Industrial		
25	Thames Water Water		
26	Cap & Regal Property		
27	Tisbury Double Building Rds		
28	Dog Motors Motors/Air		
29	Ashford Ind. Banks/Disc		
30	Scotslope Prps. Property		
31	Community H. Industrial		
32	Ugd Friendly Insurance		
33	Huntington Industrial		
34	New London Oil/Gas		
35	London Elect. Electricity		
36	Land Sec. Property		
37	Aus New Z. Banks/Disc		
38	McLeod Russell Industrial		
39	MFI Drapery/Sts		
40	Steering Pub. Newspaper/Pub		

Please take into account any minus signs

£1,000 MATCH THE SHARES
If you have ticked off your eighth share in our Match The Shares competition today, claim your prize by telephoning 0252 53272 between 10.00am and 3.30pm (see the Sunday Times for full details)

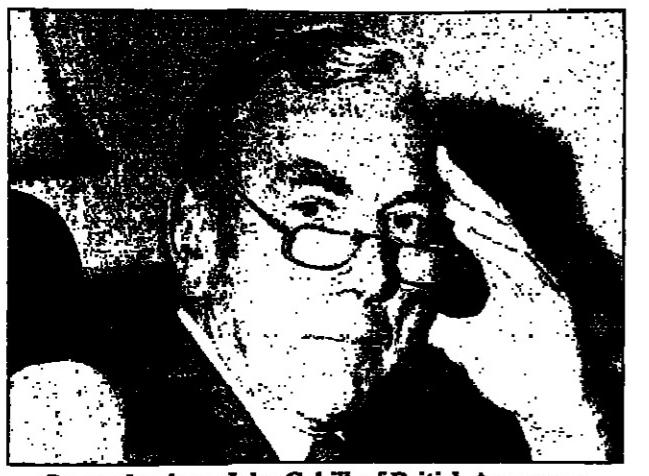
Three winners equally share yesterday's Portfolio Plus prize of £2,000. Mr R Bayfield, Ilford, Essex; Mrs S Barreau, London W1 and Mrs I Smith, Hunstanton, Norfolk.

1992 High Low Company Price Div Net Yld P/E

BUILDING, ROADS

No	Company	Price	Div	Net Yld	P/E
1	Stobart Int'l	102	1.0	10.0	105
2	Allied Irish	108	1.0	9.2	103
3	UK Land Dev.	105	1.0	9.5	105
4	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
5	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
6	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
7	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
8	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
9	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
10	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
11	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
12	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
13	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
14	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
15	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
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100	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
101	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
102	Stobart Int'l	100	1.0	10.0	105
103	Stobart Int'l</				

Shares move ahead by a fraction



Cost reductions: John Cahill, of British Aerospace

A FUTURES-inspired mark-up enabled share prices to finish the shortened Christmas Eve trading session in positive territory, but only just.

The FT-SE 100 index, up more than 13 points at the start of business, soon began to run out of steam as investor attention turned to the forthcoming festive season. It ended the session, only 0.1 higher at 2,827.5, with turnover a mere 173 million shares. Attempts by market-makers to get stock back on their books met with little success.

Again, the futures market made all the early running with the March series boast-

ing a 50-point premium at one stage on buying in a thin market. Selling by firms such as Warburg saw it close at 2,866, although sentiment generally remained firm.

British Aerospace was an early casualty after a presentation for analysts on Wednesday. Any hopes that the company's message may have contained some Christmas cheer were dashed quickly.

Analysts have begun downgrading their profit forecasts after learning that trading conditions remain difficult.

Hoare Govett, the company's own broker, led the way, increasing its forecast of pre-tax loss for the current year from £79 million to £200 million. It still expects the group to bounce back into the black in 1993 after the dramatic programme of cost reduction and rationalisation put in place by John Cahill, the new chairman. But analysts have slashed estimates of pre-tax profits from £150 million to £100 million. The group

competition from companies such as Astra, the Swedish pharmaceutical group, which has begun making big inroads into Glaxo's main antidiabetic drug market.

Glaxo consistently underperformed in the London market in 1992, but some brokers believe the shares are now oversold and are confident that Imigran, its anti-migraine treatment, will make a big contribution to profits now that it has received the go-ahead to be marketed in America, France and Germany.

The oil sector attracted some much-needed institutional support as investors began to take the view that the sector had been oversold in 1992. Lusona, which has been out of favour since it acquired Ultramar earlier this year, turned another 2p to 158p. Earlier this week, it announced the disposal of some of its North Sea assets for \$145 million. The group

closed above their worst of the day, ending 5p down, at 157p, after touching 152p.

Glaxo was another weak market, falling 8p to 748p in the wake of further selling overnight on Wall Street.

American brokers continue to take a gloomy view of the pharmaceutical industry for 1993. In the past week Glaxo has suffered a number of profit downgradings from the likes of Smith Barney and Shearson Lehman. The Americans are worried about the impact on profits of increased

costs.

Glaxo has another weak

market, falling 8p to 748p in the wake of further selling overnight on Wall Street.

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It is good to know that breaches of the selling rules are taken seriously by the regulators and the wrongdoers are punished. Or are they?

This week, the Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation announced that it had imposed its largest fine to date on Scottish Widows. The fifth-largest life company will have to pay £120,000 for failing to train and supervise its tied agents, and will also have to meet the costs of the disciplinary procedure and investigation.

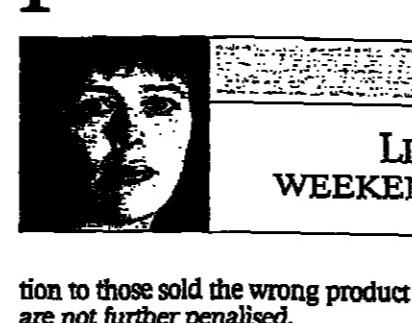
This might be regarded as a fair cop of one of the biggest and best that had failed to mend its ways quickly enough for Lauro. The paperwork of the tied agents was first found wanting in spring 1991. This April, Lauro was still not happy with the way Scottish Widows was supervising its salesmen or how much it knew about them.

Every policy sold by the tied agents in the four years from the implemen-

tation of the Financial Services Act had to be checked — the costs being borne by the existing policyholders. Now they learn that they will have to pay the fine and associated costs.

A better system should be found so that any wrongdoers and those who allow sloppy practices to go unchecked will pay the penalty, not the investors in mutual life companies. The cost will only be pennies per policy, but if fines are meant to hurt and reflect the seriousness of a breach, the pain must be felt by the guilty.

Lauro only started imposing fines in 1992. It has already hit several household names for ever increasing amounts, which must surely help the regulator's funding. Now could be the time to resolve to change its rules in 1993, so that policyholders who have already funded any compensa-



COMMENT

LINDSAY COOK
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

tion to those sold the wrong product are not further penalised.

The Financial Intermediaries Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association has also stepped up its fines. The latest penalty is £25,000 imposed on Aylesbury Associates, a broker that specialised in risky home income plan schemes for elderly home owners. The firm was declared in default in March and about 250 of its clients — mostly elderly people who borrowed using

the value of their homes as security to invest in bonds that have subsequently fallen in value as fast as their homes — have claimed compensation from the Investors' Compensation Scheme.

If the firm has no money to pay the clients who have lost money because of its dealings, it certainly will have no money to meet the fine. Fimbria is sanguine and says that fines are imposed according to the seriousness of the breach. Whether

or not Aylesbury can or will pay is another matter.

The other investment firms that will pay the compensation bill for the firm through the industry levy will be relieved to find that they will not have to dig deeper to meet the fine.

Home cheer

Letters have started to arrive in 4 million homes with good news of reduced mortgage payments in the new year for borrowers on annual review. For many, the fall will be substantial, as mortgage rates stood at 11.5 per cent a year ago and, in most cases, will be 8.5 per cent from January 1.

While lenders have tried to persuade borrowers on annual review schemes to reduce payments during

1992, as rates fell, pessimism about jobs and house prices has been so great that few have dared to do so.

Those who still feel nervous about the value of their home or work prospects in 1993 should take the opportunity to cut mortgage payments whenever it is presented. The £100 plus that will be typically saved can always be put into an investment account. Then, at the end of the lender's financial year, they can pay a lump sum off the mortgage. In most cases, failing to reduce payments only benefits the lenders. They do not take into account the larger than necessary payments and reduce the interest to be paid during the year. The extra cash should give a greater sense of well-being to families who have struggled to pay their way in 1992. It may also encourage some to venture into the housing market, as their dream home may now be a possibility after two years of falling rates, falling house prices and rising wages.

Lindsay Cook presents a Christmas money quiz for the family

Getting in trim for a financially fit 1993

AFTER the financial binge, the hangover. It may be a holiday, but the bank's computer already knows who has over-indulged. It is a terrifying thought. Those credit card slips and cash dispenser statements may not be phantoms of the blurred imagination.

This is the time to think about financial hangover cures. After all, it is a long time until the next pay cheque. But, with a little organisation, by Christmas 1993, most people can be looking forward to a solvent new year.

Sorting out a personal budget can be like starting a diet. Financial fitness is a condition of rich and poor alike. For example, there are thousands of people who needlessly pay hundreds of pounds a year in bank charges. A little reorganisation, and they would save every penny.

The most foolish are those who run expensive overdrafts when they have savings tucked away. The savings may be earning them far less than their overdraft is costing. The sensible and money-saving

way would be to pay off the overdraft and gradually restore the savings with the money that would have been eaten up in charges.

The compartmentalisation of money prevents many taking this course of action. Once money is saved it should stay, so, they argue, it is the same argument that prevents people paying off expensive credit card bills at this time of year with savings. The credit card has been melted in the pursuit of pleasure and expensive fripperies and cannot be paid for with long-term savings. However, for those who can trust themselves to pay the equivalent to at least the minimum credit card payment every month back to their savings until the balance is restored, raiding savings will prevent interest being logged up at the rate of 20-odd per cent a year while they will forgo interest of 5 per cent or less after tax.

In addition, with most cards, paying off the outstanding balance will enable the customer to use the interest-free period of up to 56

help the users of cash dispensers?

a Customers who pay off the minimum each month.

b Those who shop a lot and always pay off in full each month.

c Politicians with a penchant for red wine.

1. Who are free credit cards cheapest for?
a Customers who pay off the minimum each month.
b Those who shop a lot and always pay off in full each month.
c Politicians with a penchant for red wine.

2. What is the current annual percentage rate Barclaycard's 8 million cardholders are charged when they borrow?
a 24.9 per cent.
b 22.9 per cent.
c 29.8 per cent.

3. Who are the only people you should give your personal identification number to?
a Your wife.
b Your bank manager.
c Your bookie.

4. What is the best way of writing down your PIN?
a On the back of the card in waterproof ink.
b In your address book under credit card numbers.
c You should not write your number down anywhere. If you cannot remember it see if you can change to a memorable number. If not, write it down heavily disguised in a diary or address book and do not tell anyone.

5. In what new way do banks plan to charge personal customers in 1993?
a By installing turnstiles.
b Doubling the charges to customers who overdraw.
c By charging customers who remain in credit.

6. When did the big four banks start paying interest on current accounts?
a They do not.
b 1990.
c 1968.

7. How can most personal customers avoid paying bank charges?
a By always remaining in credit it only by a few pence.
b Send the bank manager a case of whisky at Christmas.
c Write to the banking ombudsman and complain about excessive charges.

8. How did the banking code

days for new purchases. With money still owing, interest starts to be charged on new purchases as soon as they reach the account.

It is no good trying to change from a financial incompetent who does not know that APR does not stand for approximate interest rate but for annual percentage rate overnight. Such percentage rates are the only true way of comparing interest charges because they include all the extra fees. It makes it possible to compare how costly different fixed-rate mortgages are, for example. The annual percentage rate includes the cost of the arrangement or booking fee. Once these are added, the flat rate may not look so attractive against a variable mortgage rate.

The APRs do not include the higher cost of buying contents or buildings insurance from the lender than the best in the market place either, but there have been bargains available during the year that were snapped up by the financially fit. As with dieting, budgeters

have to find what suits them best. Some people enjoy looking at the details of an array of bank and building society accounts on a computer screen at any time of the day or night. Others prefer to keep their financial dealings to one brief hour a month when all bills are dealt with.

The fearless overspender who makes expensive cash withdrawals with one credit card to pay off the bills on another will not become an expert investor straightforwardly, but given time could have a cash surplus to play with.

First of all people need to find out which category they are in. The chances are they are in better shape than they thought. Anyone who reads Weekend Money regularly should have a fair grounding in the workings of banks, building societies, insurance policies, pension funds and the Inland Revenue.

Our financial fitness quiz will indicate how tough your financial workout will need to be and how well you have read the Weekend Money pages during 1992.

3. How will the American system of debt counselling be introduced to Britain in 1993 to help people behind with their payments?

a It will provide a four-year payment plan to get their debts paid off.

b Wealthy Americans will sponsor impoverished Britons through the scheme.

c Indebted Britons will go to America to earn more so that they can pay their way.

4. What is the highest amount that can be paid as income support to meet mortgage interest payments?

a £1,000 a month.

b There is no limit. In December, it was reported that one former businessman was receiving £1,800 a week to keep him in his baronial home.

c An account that has had no transactions for 12 months.

5. What is an obsolete savings account?

a One that has an unfashionable passbook.

b One that is closed to new customers and pays a much lower rate of interest than newer accounts.

c An account that has had no transactions for 12 months.

6. What is the difference between the gross rate of interest quoted by banks and building societies and the amount paid to savers who are basic rate taxpayers?

a The taxpayers get more.

b The gross rate quoted is 33 per cent more than the net rate received.

c The gross rate is 25 per cent more than the net rate.

7. Why was the interest rate paid by the National Savings First Option Bond reduced in July?

a Because savers were suspicious of such a high return.

b Because the Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society increased its mortgage rate.

c The government had got enough money.

8. When should you tell a financial institution if you cannot meet the payments?

a As soon as you realise you have a problem.

b When you get a solicitor's letter.

c When the date for a court hearing is set.

9. Is the rate of interest charged by credit card companies higher than the interest paid on instant access savings accounts or lower?

a Higher.

b Lower.

c The same.

10. The answers to the quiz appear on page 28.



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7/12

The housing market is showing signs of revival, but a buyer does not always have to use a solicitor

Cutting the cost of moving

Nicola Cole finds that people seeking property bargains could save money on legal fees, but they must be careful



HOMEBUYERS and sellers could cut moving costs at a stroke by using licensed conveyancers for the legal work involved in ownership transfer.

Independent research has shown that conveyancers, who gained professional status five years ago, have been quoting fees on average 19.4 to 32.7 per cent lower than those sought by solicitors.

These percentages emerged in a survey forming part of *Spatial Aspects of Deregulation in the Market for Legal Services*, a study done by the economics department at the University of Strathclyde that is now being updated.

Applying those percentages to current average costs, conveyancers can save a purchaser £57 to £90 on a £50,000 house, and a minimum of £76 to £120 on a £100,000 property. Conveyancers' quoted fees have proved similarly cheaper in house sales transactions.

Although the Strathclyde survey was carried out three years ago, there is little reason to think that when the updated findings appear in February they will show a picture radically different from those unearthed before.

The Council for Licensed Conveyancers remains cautiously confident that the amounts charged by the 301 independent professionals it controls are generally lower than solicitors' fees for the same type of work. Yet in spite

of the price advantage that licensed conveyancers offer, their market share represents 1 per cent or less of the business available.

The latter will probably total about 950,000 residential property purchases by the end of the current year, against more than 1.2 million purchases in 1991.

Lack of awareness on the part of the client may be one reason why licensed conveyancers have not managed seriously to dent solicitors' market share. Potential clients may simply not realise that an authorised alternative exists to more traditional services.

As the Strathclyde study observed, there is also the "problem" of attachment to "the family firm of solicitors". It could be called the comfort factor. Why switch horses for the sake of saving a few

pounds when the local law practice not only guarantees title (right to possession) but has measurably cut its fees since the mid-eighties?

Licensed conveyancers, in demonstrating their capability and trustworthiness to a wider audience, could justifiably highlight their status as property law specialists whose qualifying examinations are as stringent — more so, some say — as those confronting solicitors. Almost 1,000 students are studying to obtain licences.

The Council for Licensed Conveyancers, which is funded in part by the Lord Chancellor's department, works to ensure "efficient and economic services". It has the power to issue and remove the annual licences, also to discipline practitioners who breach its rules of conduct and practice. Council members include two

trade department representatives specifically briefed to safeguard consumer interests. Compensation funds and professional insurances are in place.

The number of complaints has risen — the council blames recession-prompted transaction failures — and now runs at a rate of "roughly less than one a week". Andrew Viner, the council secretary said, "One of the main causes is failure of communication — people not understanding their position and others not explaining it to them properly."

The council urges caution in selecting a licensed conveyancer. "Not everyone who calls themselves a property conveyancer is licensed." Their status can always be checked with the council, which is based at Suite 3, Cairngorm House, 203 Marsh Wall, London E14 9YT. Telephone: 071 537 2953.

Spatial Aspects of Deregulation in the Market for Legal Services, Department of Economics, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

The real price of do-it-yourself conveyancing

By LIZ DOLAN

HOMEBUYERS who decide to do their own conveyancing need an organised mind and a reasonable amount of free time. They must also be prepared to query any unexpected costs, as Carole Marsh discovered when she sold a house to her daughter, Sarah, in the summer.

The Alliance & Leicester, Miss Marsh's lender, said there would be no charges except for the surveyor's fee.

She was, therefore, surprised to receive a letter from the society later informing her that she would have to pay a £25 "administration fee" because she would be arranging her own insurance. She would also have to pay £100, plus value-added tax, to the society's solicitor. The society said this sum was "based on a fee agreed between the Law Society and the Council of Mortgage Lenders".

Miss Marsh was even more surprised when the society's solicitor subsequently informed her that she would be charged £200, plus VAT. Undaunted, she demanded to know why the solicitor had seen fit to double the original quote and was rewarded with a return to the £100 charge.

They had intended to employ a solicitor to do their conveyancing. However, after contacting a few firms, they discovered they would have to pay at least £600 for what, to them, appeared to be a simple transaction.

Mrs Marsh said: "We calculated that the entire costs if we did it ourselves would be around £100. It shouldn't be a problem because we know each other, but if I wasn't selling to Sarah, I think I would be a bit scared. If she was buying a strange house, I think she would still have used a solicitor."

The Consumers' Association agrees that nobody should consider doing their own conveyancing except in the simplest of situations. Un-

fortunately, most of the circumstances considered unsuitable for do-it-yourself conveyancing apply to properties most commonly acquired by first-time buyers, the very people who are least likely to have money to play with. These include leasehold flats and "hybrid transactions", such as those offered by some housing associations to help first-time buyers get a foot on the housing ladder.

Other proscribed areas include new properties, buying at auction, buying from divorced or separated couples and transactions where the other side is also acting for him or herself, or using an unlicensed conveyancer. A solicitor should also be employed when buying or selling property outside England or Wales.

Even when there are no obvious difficulties, there are still risks. The Consumers' Association gives a warning that buying a home without attending to all the necessary safeguards can mean the loss of a lot of money, ending up with a worthless property, or even one that is still owned by someone else. In suitable circumstances, however, the association calculates that savings can be between £150 and £500, on average, per transaction with do-it-yourself conveyancing.

As well as a logical mind, those doing their own conveyancing must have access to typing and photocopying facilities and be contactable by telephone. Those who are buying and selling at the same time are likely to find that more than twice as much work is involved than if they were doing one or the other.

There are books on the subject, the best of which are easy-to-follow, step-by-step guides on what is basically a straightforward exercise. The Consumers' Association publication, *Doing Your Own Conveyancing*, costs £12.95.

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GUARANTEED rates of between 7 and 8 per cent are being offered on fixed-rate bonds from the Bradford & Bingley and Portman building societies. The Portman will pay 8 per cent gross, 6 per cent net, on balances of between £500 and £25,000 (£50,000 for a joint account) held for six months. Savers keeping their funds with the society for 12 months will get 7 per cent gross, 5.5 per cent net, on balances of between £500 and £10,000. The BBB has raised its rates on its Maximiser Fixed Reserve Bond. It will now pay 7 per cent gross, 5.25 per cent net, an increase of 0.4 per cent gross. Investors are guaranteed a minimum return of 6.6 per cent gross, 4.95 per cent net, if base rates continue to fall. But if rates increase, rates on the bond could rise as well. The minimum investment is £5,000. No additions or withdrawals are allowed in the first 12 months.

□ The Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society is

to cut rates on its London Deposit account from January 2.

Savers with balances of between £5,000 and £9,999

will earn 7 per cent gross, 5.25 per cent net, down from 9.1

per cent gross, 6.82 per cent net. Balances of between £25,000 and £3 million will earn 8 per cent gross, 6 per cent net, instead of 10 per cent gross, 7.5 per cent net. Those wanting monthly income will get a top rate of 7.6 per cent gross, 5.7 per cent net, instead of the current rates of 9.5 per cent gross, 7.12 per cent net.

□ The annual rates on personal loans from the Yorkshire Bank are being cut by 2 per cent between December 29 and January 29. The move will cut the rate on a loan of £2,000 repayable over three years from 20.4 to 18.4 per cent. The minimum loan is £200, with no maximum.

□ Birmingham Midshires

Building Society has launched two fixed-rate deals — an 8.49

per cent mortgage fixed until

January 31, 1998, and a 7.35 per cent mortgage fixed for two years. The five-year loan has an APR of 8.9 per cent and an arrangement fee of £245. The two-year loan has an arrangement fee of £195.

□ The new "official rate" of interest used to calculate the tax employees pay on cheap loans provided by employers will fall from 9 per cent to 8.25 per cent on January 6.

□ Midland Bank is offering a free driving lesson with the British School of Motoring to 16 to 18-year-olds opening a Livecash account. The offer, which runs from December 29, is one of a range of incentives from the bank to tempt young people to open accounts. The minimum age has been lowered from 13 to 11 and the minimum opening balance has been reduced from £10 to £1. All new and existing customers aged 11 to 18 will get £30 of vouchers giving them savings on goods from a range of stores.

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NatWest puts a spotlight on accounts

CUSTOMERS of National Westminster Bank could find that branch managers contact them much more quickly next year if monthly salary cheques fail to arrive, or accounts are pushed into the red by significant changes in transactions (Sara McConnell writes).

The bank is developing technology to carry out "real time behavioural scoring" on customers' current accounts. NatWest believes it is the first bank to do this.

The technology will enable a branch to run checks on the present activity of an account and see if it accords with the normal pattern. If it deviates significantly, the manager will contact the customer to ask if



Powell: "more in touch"

there is a problem. The idea is for bank managers and staff to become more proactive and approach customers rather than wait to hear that they are in difficulties because of redundancy, or for other reasons.

A customer will then be invited to discuss the problems with the manager and work out ways of rescheduling payments or, in some cases, consolidating debts into a single payment.

David Powell, NatWest's UK head of personal finance, said the necessary check systems to enable branch staff to do this could be in place by the middle of next year. At present, NatWest, like other

banks, manages "by exception". Branches wait to hear from the customer, but often debts have started to build up by the time the customer finds the time, or plucks up the courage, to make contact.

Mr Powell said: "Branches will be able to be more in touch with their customers. We already do a lot of sitting down with clients, advising them on debt problems."

NatWest, in common with other leading banks, is selective about its customers and says it wants to help creditworthy customers who make it through the initial screening process. The bank will refuse to take on those with county court judgments against them, or those who cannot stick to debt repayments agreed with a creditor.

In a separate initiative, NatWest is sponsoring two self-help packages on dealing with debt. The two booklets, *Dealing with Your Debts if You Rent Your Home*, and *Dealing with Your Debts if You Have a Mortgage*, will be available through Citizens Advice Bureaux.

The booklets are designed to take people step by step through working out a personal budget. They also contain sample letters to creditors. The consequences of not paying priority debts, such as the mortgage and community charge, are explained, as are the consequences of not paying gas and electricity bills.

After arrangements to pay some of the outstanding debt or rescheduling priority debt repayments, the remaining money can be shared between non-priority creditors.

The guides advise people in difficulties to try to attend court hearings, if events are taken that far. People should not be tempted to borrow money to pay off debts without getting advice first, as this could make matters worse.

The Citizens Advice Bureau emphasised that the booklets would not be a substitute for a personal interview with an adviser, but would be complementary to it.

	Nominal rate	Compounded at the rate	Min/max investment £	Notice	Contact
BANKS					
Ordinary Dep A/c:	0.38	0.38	0.30	1,000	7 day
Typical					
Fixed Term Deposits:					
Barclays	4.45	4.45	3.56	25,000-50,000	1 mth 071-225 1557
"	4.45	4.45	3.56	25,000-50,000	1 mth 071-225 1557
Lloyds	3.75	3.75	3.12	10,000-50,000	1 mth Local Branch
"	4.05	4.05	3.22	10,000-50,000	8 mth Local Branch
Midland	4.58	4.58	3.67	10,000-50,000	1 mth 0742 828655
"	4.78	4.78	3.82	10,000-50,000	3 mth 0742 828655
NatWest	4.21	4.21	3.45	25,000-50,000	1 mth 071-725 1000

	Bank of Scotland NBC	Barclays	Prudential	Co-operative	Ulster	Cheltenham	Lloyd's TICCA	Midland HICA	NatWest	Special Reserve	Royal Bank of Scotland P/c	TSB Bank	HCA
Best buy — largest socs:	4.98	5.10	4.08	2,500*	none	031-442 7777							
Bristol & West	2.93	2.98	2.13										
Bristol & West	6.93	6.93	5.46	2,000 min	Postal								
Bristol & West	6.93	6.93	5.46	25,000 min	Postal								
Northern Rock	5.23	5.23	4.23	2,000 min	Postal								
Northern Rock	5.23	5.23	4.23	25,000 min	Postal								
Nationwide	5.93	5.93	4.93	25,000 min	Postal								
Best buy — all socs:	6.90	6.90	5.52	25,000 min	Postal								
Bristol & West	5.23	5.23	4.23	2,000 min	Postal								
Northern Rock	5.23	5.23	4.23	25,000 min	Postal								
Birmingham Mid	5.23	5.23	4.23	25,000 min	Postal								
Newcastle & Peter	7.18	7.18	5.75	10,000 min	80 day								
Greenwich	7.90	7.90	6.33	50,000 min	1 year								
Compiled by Chesa de Vere Moneypenny - call 071 404 5765 for further details													

	Building Societies	Ordinary Share	Acc	1.31	1.31	1.05	1+	none	—
Best buy — largest socs:	Bristol & West	6.93	6.93	5.46	2,000 min	Postal			
Bristol & West	6.93	6.93	5.46	25,000 min	Postal				
Northern Rock	5.23	5.23	4.23	2,000 min	Postal				
Northern Rock	5.23	5.23	4.23	25,000 min	Postal				
Nationwide	5.93	5.93	4.93	25,000 min	Postal				
Best buy — all socs:	Bristol & West	6.90	6.90	5.52	25,000 min	Postal			
Bristol & West	5.23	5.23	4.23	2,000 min	Postal				
Northern Rock	5.23	5.23	4.23	25,000 min	Postal				
Birmingham Mid	5.23	5.23	4.23	25,000 min	Postal				
Newcastle & Peter	7.18	7.18	5.75	10,000 min	80 day				
Greenwich	7.90	7.90	6.33	50,000 min	1 year				
Compiled by Chesa de Vere Moneypenny - call 071 404 5765 for further details									

	NATIONAL SAVINGS	RATES	HOLIDAY RATES	£
Ordinary A/c:	5.20	3.75	3.00	5-10,000 8 day 041-649-4555
Ordinary A/c*	5.20	3.75	3.00	5-25,000 1 mth 041-649-4555
Income Bond*	7.00	5.25	4.20	1,000-50,000 3 yrs 0303 6618111
First Opt Bond*	6.50	6.50	5.50	100-500,000 8 day 091-386 4900
4th Opt Bond*	5.20	5.20	4.20	100-500,000 14 day 091-386 4900
Children's Bond	7.95	5.75	5.75	20-400/min 14 day 091-386 4900
Gas/Electric Bond	3.75	3.75	3.75	100-100,000 8 days 041-649-4555
Capital Bond*	7.75	5.50	4.50	100-100,000 8 days 041-649-4555
Guaranteed Income Bonds	5.00	+3.0%	Transfer fee on	Figures from National Savings
Prosperity	5.55	5.55	4.72	5-25,000 1 mth 041-649-4555
Prudential	5.55	5.55	4.72	5-25,000 1 mth 041-649-4555
Leisureline Life	6.70	6.70	4.02	50,000 min 3 yrs 071-225 9111
Prudential Life	6.70	6.70	4.02	50,000 min 3 yrs 071-225 9111
Leisureline Life	7.00	7.00	5.95	50,000 min 5 yrs for details
Telephone number				
TESSA	CAP £3,000 val	Transfer fee on	167.00	
National Crisis	5.20	5.20	4.20	5.00
West Bromwich	6.00	25,254.70	90 days loss inst	0372 742211
Beverley	8.00	25,270.00	225-270 days notice	071 225 9111
Tipton & Croy	8.05	25,285.00	220-270 days notice	01482 891510

* 2.5% for balances below £500, 5% for £500 to £1,000, interest accrued on minimum of £100 of each balance. Interest is paid quarterly.

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Figures correct to 26/11/92. Details of guaranteed TESSA V available from National & Provincial Building Society, Provincial House, Bradford BD1 1NL.

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WEST BROMWICH	6.50	£20K-750K	60	After 2% off for 12 months
ROYAL BANK OF SCOT.	5.99	£150K-250K	85	Capped to 1.3.94
BANKS	5.99	£150K-250K	85	Capped to 1.3.94
BANKS	7.99	£20K	80	Fixed for 3 years

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No access to my Access

From Mr J. Shirley Edmondson

Sir, I was interested to read the article on credit cards (December 5), as I had tried in vain throughout Friday to find out exactly how much I owed on my Access card.

It was quite impossible to get through on the helpline and the automatic system refused to accept my credit card number. In the end, I was reduced to adding up all the slips I could find, and sending off what I hoped was the correct amount.

It appears that it is quite impossible to be sure one has paid all one's debts until the credit card company sends one's account. Is there any other solution?

Yours sincerely,

J. SHIRLEY
EDMONDSON,
8 Montpelier House,
Suffolk Square,
Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire.

Bupa premium soars

From Mr H. G. Dawson

Sir, In January 1992, Bupa advised an increase in subscription for my wife and myself of 31.6 per cent. In order to reduce the cost we agreed to a voluntary excess of £250 per person annually.

For 1993 we have been advised that the premium is to go up by a further 19.3 per cent.

Over the two years the increase amounts to 57 per cent. Surely this amount cannot be justified when the cost of living index has increased by only 7.7 per cent over the same period.

Yours sincerely,
H. G. DAWSON,
17 Park Shaw, Sedlescombe,
Battle, East Sussex.

Benefit is a refund

From Mrs J. Farrell

Sir, Mr Desmond Hartley (Letters December 12) is wrong — child benefit is not a blanket benefit — it is more properly a tax refund which replaced the previous child allowance, which was claimed against taxation. Child benefit only became a true "benefit" when the family unit does not have enough taxable income to have paid the "equivalent" tax.

Yours faithfully,

J. FARRELL,
64 East Avenue,
Talbot Woods,
Bournemouth,
Dorset.

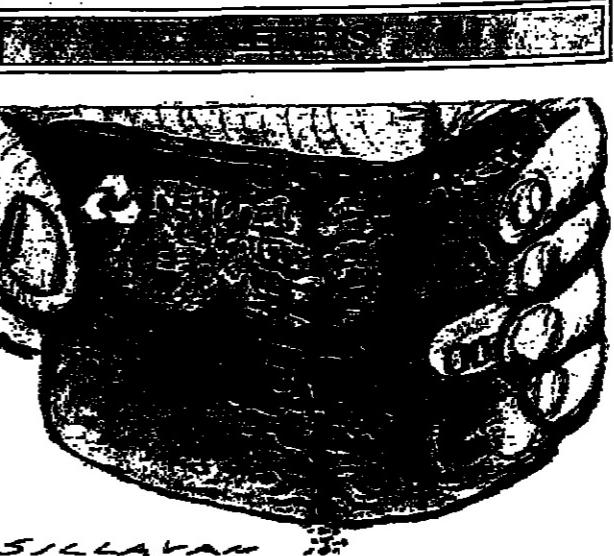
In these cases, there is nothing to be lost by contacting the pension fund administrators to see if any benefits can still be obtained from the scheme, but it is extremely unlikely that such an approach will be successful. If, as Mr Clarke says, he left the scheme in 1968, withdrawing his contributions that would almost certainly have extinguished any pension rights that he had in it. It is true that there have been some recent decisions by the European Court on pensions matters, but these have tended to concentrate on issues of sexual discrimination, rather than the treatment of early leavers.

Also, the government is generally not receptive to EC intervention in employment matters and so has taken steps to minimise their effect here. As a result, the decisions in question do not have retrospective effect.

The reason the bank refunded the customer was, through no fault of his own, he had a problem reporting the loss of his card.

Yours faithfully,

FIONA YOUNG
(Press and PR Manager),
Girobank Plc,
49 Park Lane,
W1.



Identifying pension rights of early leavers

From D. M. Clarke

Sir, I have been told that it is now possible for a former employer's contributions to a pension fund to be released retrospectively into another fund, even though the employee's contributions were withdrawn in cash on ceasing employment, an option that was once permitted by the Inland Revenue. I am not aware of any changes in UK legislation that allows this but wonder if such authority might emanate from EC law, directives or court judgements. Can anyone please enlighten me on the subject?

Yours faithfully,
D. M. CLARKE,
White Cottage, Chalk Lane,
East Horsey, Suffolk.

Tax-effective charity

From Mr Brian Whittingham Sir, Your article by Liz Dolan and Nicola Cole (December 19) does not mention the deposited covenant. This will be of particular interest to readers who fear redundancy, or who are approaching retirement and a reduced income. It is also useful in the event of one acquiring a non-recurrent lump sum, whether by inheritance, gambling or other source.

The procedure is simple: the donor requests a special form and deposits the lump sum free of interest with the selected charity, which is then required to take 25 per cent of the amount annually over the usual four-year period of a covenant.

An added bonus for the donor lies in the fact that there is no need to set up a standing order and then seek to remember all the payments when keeping an eye on one's balance between statements.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN WHITTINGHAM,
8 Allicard Close,
Horsham, West Sussex.

Standards are sloppy

From Mr A. G. Hebborn Sir, Mr Pardon (How to lose customers, December 18) enquires if any readers have had similar experiences. I have.

I went into a large department store, selected an electrical appliance costing under £100, asked for it to be delivered to my home, wrote out a cheque, and presented a £100 cheque guarantee card. The shop assistant then asked me for proof of identity. I pointed out that the card guaranteed payment, that if they did not trust me they could cash my cheque before they delivered the goods, and that they had my address in case of query. The shop assistant still insisted on proof of identity, and when I asked why that was a rule of the shop, I then demanded to see the manager — he immediately authorised the sale to go ahead without proof of identity.

Such experiences seem to me to be the result of hiring sales staff of limited mentality and giving them inadequate training. They are a symptom of a far wider range of inefficiency and general sloppiness in all walks of business life today, of which I am sure that your readers of mature age must have become aware.

Yours faithfully,
A. G. HEBBORN,
29 Fairacres,
Kingsgate, Middlesex.

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BUSINESS PROFILE: Michael Marks

Master tactician with an independent streak

Carol Leonard looks behind the almost mythical image of Smith New Court's energetic chief

Six years ago few people would have believed it. Smith Brothers, the jobbing firm, decided to go it alone post-Big Bang, by following an independent course. At a time when arch-rivals such as Wedd Durlacher were selling out to the likes of Barclays Bank, its chosen path seemed brave, possibly foolish. Now, Smith New Court has outpaced almost all those rivals.

It is generally acknowledged to be the best there is when it comes to market-making, and it is considered to be the top five — behind Warburg and Cazenove — for corporate finance, research and sales. Its one concession to the new order was to permit NM Rothschild to subscribe to a 34 per cent stake. Half its income now comes from non-risk — non marketing-making — activities and 40 per cent from international business.

Central among the figures behind this defiant plan is Michael Marks, chief executive since 1987. A small, dapper man, not well known outside his immediate circle, he has shunned almost all interviews and, in the absence of hard facts, has evolved into an almost mythical figure.

Dealers and salesmen among his 1,250 employees are accustomed to seeing him walking daily across the trading floors in the firm's new Farringdon Street offices, but even they know little about his background. He is a man who plays his cards close to his chest, who talks continuously about team work, who shifts awkwardly in his seat when he is forced to talk about himself, who is warm, emotional, but also impatient, given to impulsive decision-making and capable of being ruthless.

He is far happier to talk about business and he will acknowledge that Smith New Court's culture is radically different to that of any other City firm. That its senior, and largely Jewish personnel, have remained in tact despite Big Bang, that its employees have rejected lucrative offers from rival houses and that its club-like atmosphere — "I prefer to call it team spirit, not club-like," says Marks — is the closest any City firm has yet come to recreating the close-knit relationships of the stock exchange of yesteryear.

"Big Bang turned the City into a game of musical chairs and the thing that I am most proud of is that we didn't lose a single soul from the original partnership," Marks explains. "We have all been together for in excess of 20 years and that has been one of the great strengths of this firm. We have an *esprit de corps* which is second to none." One of the key attractions as far as those employees are concerned is, he

says, its independence, another is its management style. His management style:

"We are prepared to give a guy his head. Each manager is given targets and budgets and allowed to manage his business himself. If he makes a mistake he has made it himself. You cannot manage people simply by ordering them around, it does not work, and you cannot keep people simply by paying them more money. If you do that you get into the fastest gun in the West syndrome. Someone will always pay more. If you make him very much a part of a team, he will stay."

He prides himself on pulling the geographically diverse parts of the business together — Hong Kong, Singapore, New York — and on infusing them with the same corporate culture. He does this by tireless communication, by travelling often — New York six times a year, the Far East twice.

"We are a highly mobile firm. Everybody travels a lot and so the offices are not foreign to us. I will speak to Hong Kong, Singapore and New York 15 times a week on the telephone, and I can picture their offices as we talk."

'I was made a blue button. I was hooked from that moment'

Given that the culture of any organisation inevitably reflects the personality of the man at its top, Smith New Court's culture and management style gives the first and most obvious clue to his inner being.

He is energetic, needs little sleep and has never been known to complain of fatigue. He can think with lightning speed, as would be expected of any instinctive dealer, and his judgment when it comes to executing a deal can rarely be faulted. He is a master tactician, not a strategist.

Yet for all that frenetic activity he does not ordinarily suffer from stress, he says he finds it easy to sit down, to relax, even to lay on a beach and read a book. To him his work is not a job, or a means to an end, it is a way of life. For the past 32 years, after all, he has known nothing else.

"Over any weekend I will speak to at least half a dozen of my colleagues and they will have spoken to each other as well. I do not mind that at all. I love coming in here. Life is too short to do something you don't enjoy. To us this firm is a living thing," Marks, 51 tomorrow, joined Smith Brothers at the age of 17, when his uncle, Henry Marks, was its

joint senior partner. "I did not take to being a messenger or a tea boy, that was dreadfully boring, and I did not enjoy shuffling paper around the office when I learned the settlements side, but then I was made a blue button and sent on to the floor of the exchange and I was hooked from that moment on. I definitely fell in love. It had a buzz, an excitement. It is either in your blood or it isn't."

Marks understands Smith New Court so entirely — its market-making operation best of all — that his instincts are uncannily accurate. His natural impatience means that he can be intolerant if other people do not react with the same speed.

Fellow director Anthony Abrahams, a friend for more than 30 years, says: "I have heard him shout once or twice. Maybe there is a lack of tolerance or a lack of humility. He cannot understand it if other people can't keep up. He was never very bright academically, but he catches on very quickly. If a complicated situation is being explained to him, by a merchant banker perhaps, he will zoom in on the important points."

Any hint of intolerance disappears when he returns to his Highgate home, however. There he and his wife, Rosemary, have three children, David, 23, Joanna, 21, and Emily 11. Marks says he is at his happiest when the house is full of teenage children. The house has a juke box and, until recently, he drove a black Ferrari. "He was always very flash as a young man," Abrahams says. "He has charisma, is good looking and used to be very popular with the ladies." Marks has evolved into a strong family man. "I'm not particularly religious, but one of the pluses of the Jewish religion is that its culture revolves around the family and I guard that."

He has, in his own way, created what he never had as a child. Born into a middle class, semi-detached home in north London, he was an only child and his mother sacrificed to send him to St Paul's School. His father had been killed in a tank in North Africa shortly after his birth.

"He named me but never met me. Yes, of course, I wished I had a father. I often wished I could meet him for just one day." He admits that his lack of a father could explain his tough, aggressive and independent streak. The firm is again like the man. "It made me grow up earlier than most. It turned me into a man much earlier. I had to learn to look after myself — I knew that there was no one there for me to fall back on."

Yule visit from sanity clause

AS I have said before, there is nothing that will better restore a feeling that you are sane and the whole world is mad than a glance at court cases involving value-added tax. A glance down the index of *Tolley's VAT Cases*, the great compendium of such lunacies, will confirm your belief that Customs and Excise is barking and the rest of us are fine.

Not that the coming months' events are going to be confined to the book VAT harmonisation with a single market, arriving on January 1, is going to bring further mayhem to the tax scene. For example, and for reasons far too complex to explain here, the freelance florists of west London are likely to take to the streets in complaint over what they see as VAT blunders. The complexities of the VAT changes are likely to be well beyond many traders until long after the returns should have been in.

So it is likely that the *Tolley's* list of arguments over default surcharges will extend further. A gatefold index may be required. At present, they stretch from "death of accountant" to "Chinese records kept in".

This being Christmas, I thought it might be helpful if I ran through some of the VAT nonsense that has come about through Customs and Excise, by and large, ignoring the fact that every year at this time, there is a short holiday, which sometimes stretches into the new year and, therefore, straddles a VAT period. Take the Gundy Harris case, for example, of, as *Tolley's* puts it, "accountant claiming to have delivered return by hand before due date". Customs claimed the return arrived late and levies a penalty. The company appealed. "Its accountant gave evidence that he had delivered the return by hand on December 22," *Tolley's* says. But, long after the event, Customs asked the sort of questions that you wouldn't know the answer to even if asked the morning after. In cross-examination, the accountant's description of the size of the building and of

the layout of its entrance appeared not to correspond with the actual geography of the VAT office in question."

That one was lost. The court found that "in view of the inaccuracy of the accountant's description of the VAT office which he claimed to have visited, he had not shown 'on the balance of probabilities' that he had actually visited the VAT office".

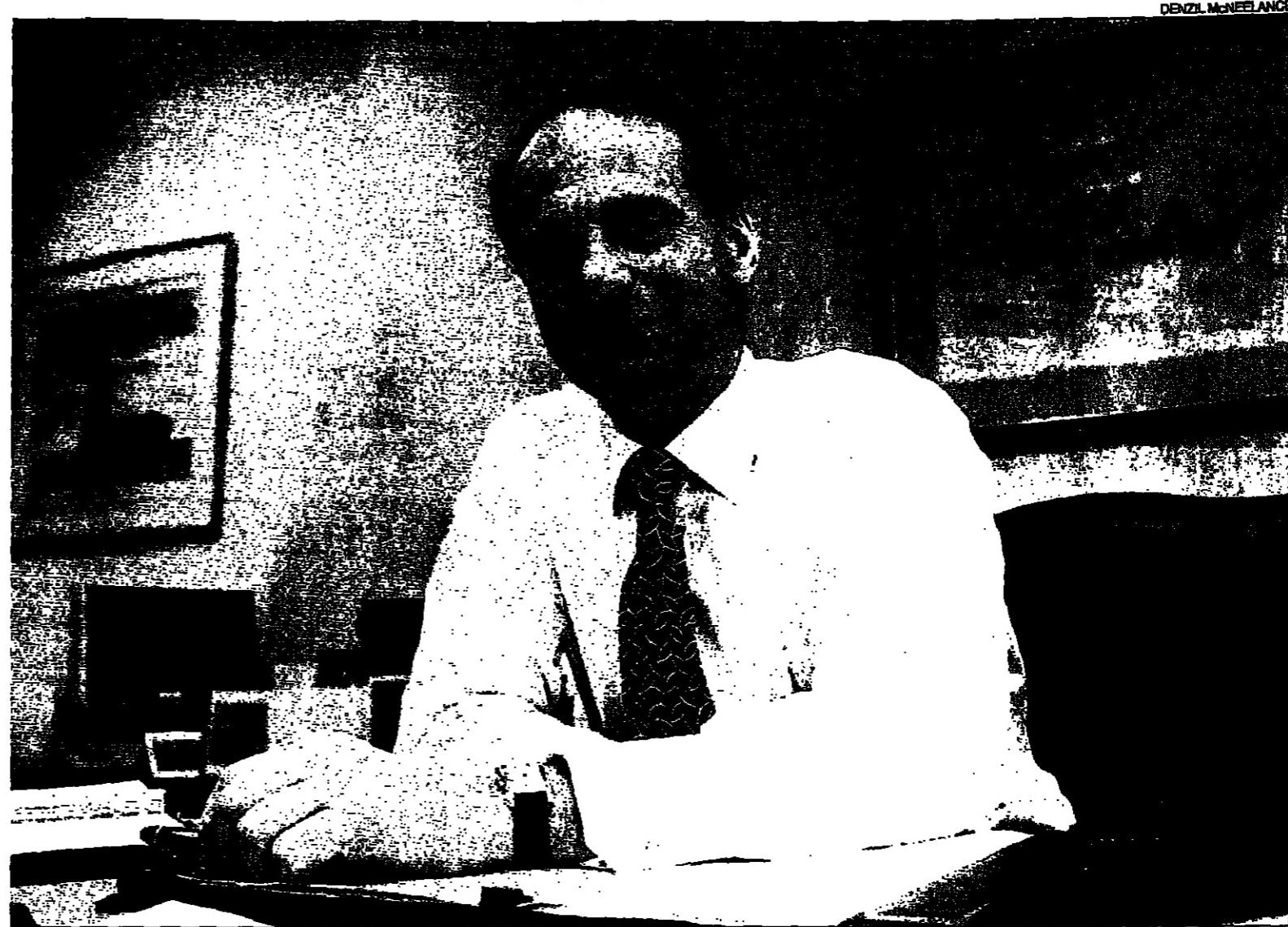
Worse for dozens of other companies has been the steady stream of unseasonable behaviour in recent years by the VAT staff. The first occurred in 1988, when the fashion for Christmas holidays lasting until mid-January got under way. As a result, tax returns arrived late and penalties were levied. On appeal, it was found that "the closure of a company's premises over a long Christmas holiday was held not to be a reasonable excuse". This decision spawned dozens of similar complaints. All argued that Christmas was to blame. And all of them have been rebuffed. However, P&H Pipework argued that Easter was to blame — but still lost its case.

But there is joy in Christmas, and it is to be found in the Cameron Instrument case. It always shut from December 18 to January 5. Being sensible, the company always wrote to the VAT office explaining that its VAT return would be delayed. "The letters," we learn, "were never acknowledged and the returns were always made early in January." In 1987, it received a surcharge liability notice. So Cameron wrote again to explain. On January 11, the company submitted its return and a surcharge was levied. It appealed and won. It had "reasonable excuse" because of the previous practice which had led it to believe that it was permissible to submit the Christmas return late.

Which goes to show that, despite the VAT office's traditional hocus-pocus, it is still possible at Christmas to believe in a sanity clause. The author is an associate editor of Accountancy Age.



ROBERT
BRUCE



Seat of power: Michael Marks, who admits that the jobbing firm he joined at the age of 17 made him grow up earlier than most

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would think
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Christmas.

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GLAXO SHARES FALL
ON WORRIES OVER
NEW COMPETITORS

BUSINESS

SATURDAY DECEMBER 26 1992

ACCOUNTANCY 31

ROBERT BRUCE ON
VATMEN, LUNACY AND
THE SANITY CLAUSE

BUSINESS EDITOR JOHN BELL



Hot money: Barclays' network of cash machines was dispensing £2,000 a second before the power failed

Power failure dries up the flow from cash dispensers

By NEIL BENNETT, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

ABOUT 1,200 Barclays Bank cash dispensers were hit by power failures on Christmas eve. Almost half of Barclays machines in the Midlands and north of England were affected and branches stayed open past noon to provide cash.

Prior to the problem, Barclays' network of cash machines was dispensing more than £2,000 a second in the busiest moments before Christmas.

High street banks say there was a late surge in cash withdrawals and heavy use of credit and debit cards before Christmas suggesting that consumer spending was more resilient than originally feared.

Barclays, Britain's largest bank, said that withdrawals from its 2,600 cash machines were up 11 per cent from last year, slightly ahead of its own forecasts. The bank expected its machines to pay out £214 million in the five days before Christmas, but early figures suggest the final total will be higher. In the first 50 weeks of the year Barclays dis-

pensed a record £8.7 billion through its machines in 187 million transactions, an average of more than £45 per withdrawal.

Overall, analysts expect cash machines to be used more than 1.5 billion times this year. Cash machines now account for at least two-thirds of all withdrawals.

Barclays, which is also the country's largest credit and debit card processor, said that it handled 20 million credit card transactions in the first three weeks of December, worth a total of £950 million, a 9 per cent rise over last year. "After a slow start in Britain's high streets we saw a last minute dash," said John Eaton, the managing director of Barclays Merchant Services.

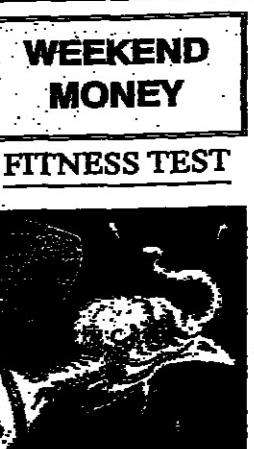
The values of debit card transactions reached £320 million, almost 50 per cent higher than in 1991, due to the increasing popularity of this form of payment and the decline in the use of cheques.

Barclays' figures show that cash demand rose as Christmas approached. On the last

Saturday in November, Barclays' machines delivered £42.5 million, an increase of 2.5 per cent on last year. But a week later the growth was 11 per cent. Sunday withdrawals from cash machines are 45 per cent higher than a year ago.

The suggestions in the bank's data that there has been a late rush to the shops were confirmed by Transax, the cheque authorisation service. The company said that the number of cheques it accepted on December 19 was 21 per cent higher than the week before. The rise was four times higher than last year. In all, Transax authorised 34,200 cheques worth £4.37 million on the day, up from 28,500 the week before.

Both Barclays and Transax report that electrical and jewellery shops did particularly well in the Christmas rush, which will be a relief for both Dixons and Ratners. The two also agree that there was a last-minute boom in the catalogue stores, such as Argos.



Feeling bloated,
overspent and
underfinanced? Now's
the time to get to grips
with your financial
health and start training
Page 27

BANK WATCH

One bank hopes to know before its customers when they hit financial trouble, and act accordingly
Page 29

ILL HEALTH



The cost of private medical insurance is concerning one reader who reports a 57 per cent rise over two years
Letters, page 30

HOME COSTS



Conveyancing can be costlier than expected for people who do it themselves. But using a licensed conveyancer can save money
Page 28

Shares fail to hold their best levels

By MICHAEL CLARK

INVESTOR confidence helped the stock market initially during the shortened trading session on Christmas eve, although share prices failed to hold their best levels.

The FT-SE 100 index enjoyed an early mark-up on the back of a futures-inspired rally and, at one stage, was displaying a rise of more than 13 points. But that lead was steadily whittled away in late trading as the future came under selling pressure and investor attention was distracted by the forthcoming festivities.

The index eventually closed 0.1 up at 2,827.5 in thin trading with only 173 million shares changing hands. But attempts by market-makers to get some much-needed stock back on their books appeared to have met with minimal success.

Investors are entering the new year more confident than they have been for some time. Many fund managers are starting to view 1993 as the year of economic recovery.

Their confidence is in stark contrast to the general view of prospects in the run-up to Black Wednesday in September, and the subsequent devolution of the pound and drop in interest rates.

There had been a brief period of celebration after the Conservative party's election victory in April. But that eventually gave way to a period of steady decline, with the index touching a low for the year of 2,281 in August, with the economy remaining in deep recession.

Most fund managers will be glad to see the back of 1992, although the index still ended about 15 per cent up on the same time last year.

□ The Central Bank of Ireland has cut its overnight support rate from 16 to 14 per cent. The move follows the four point cut from 20 to 16 per cent on December 15.

Stock market, page 26

Water suppliers to invest £2.5bn

By OUR CITY STAFF

BRITAIN'S water supply companies are on course to invest £2.5 billion in new projects by the end of the decade, creating or maintaining more than 2,000 jobs. The news will cheer the hard-pressed construction industry, but the cost will ultimately be met by domestic consumers.

Pipelines, treatment plants and reservoirs are at the core of the investment programme. The industry is spending close to £30 billion on upgrading and extending its services.

John Browning, chairman of the Water Companies' Association, said a programme of rolling investment, which

began in 1989, was now well underway. He said: "This we hope, will come as some good news for building industry leaders... In the water sector at least, the prospects for construction are excellent."

Many of the 23 water supply companies, along with the ten large water and sewerage companies, will be spending heavily in the next few years. Three Valleys, comprising Colne Valley, Lee Valley and Rickmansworth, is to invest £400 million in capital expenditure in 1990-9. Essex Water is expected to spend £275 million, followed by Bristol Water with £160 million.

The water industry has given warning that the cost of treating and supplying water may cause water bills to double in real terms by 2005.

Mid Kent with £130 million and North East with £109 million. South Staffordshire expects to spend £98 million.

Much of the cost of this investment is being passed to consumers in higher charges.

Ian Byatt, director-general of Ofwat, the water industry regulator, has given warning that present levels of service from all 33 water companies in England and Wales will be taken into account when price limits are reset in 1994.

The water industry has given warning that the cost of treating and supplying water may cause water bills to double in real terms by 2005.

Stock market, page 26

City bubbles over with festive spirit

By JON ASHWORTH

THE City ground to a halt for the Christmas break in a flurry of mince pies, flying corks and hoan announcements. Some money-men reached for their telephones to strike one last deal before the systems shut down. Most reached for the champagne.

With the City working a half day on Christmas eve, wine bars were crowded. For many, the fun had begun much earlier. At Lehman Brothers International (Europe), dealers on the fourth floor celebrated with rock and roll and mince pies. Salesmen at Smith New Court brought their children in for the morning. Upstairs, Michael Marks, chief executive, hosted a champagne reception for his directors.

Corney & Barrow's cham-

pagne bar at Lloyd's of London was swamped by requests for their house label, Peter Mokroll, the manager, said: "People were queuing up from 11 am."

For two public companies, Christmas was very nearly a bleak affair. Merivale Moore, the property group, was the victim of a hoax announcement that it had been placed

in receivership. Jim Neill, managing director, spent most of Christmas eve on the telephone reassuring anyone to whom he could speak that the report was nonsense. "It's very galling," said Mr Neill, who flies to Florida tomorrow for a Christmas break. "It would have looked like I'd flown off with the money."

Stanhope Properties suf-

fered a similar misfortune the day before, when Brunswick, its public relations firm, accidentally announced that the company had agreed new credit facilities and was announcing its results. Neither was correct.

Even the accountancy firms joined in the festivities. Press officers at Coopers & Lybrand splashed out on chicken wings and a round of Danish pastries. Similar merrymaking was reported at KPMG Peat Marwick, where the public relations team was granted a "lukewarm bottle of white wine and some mince pies". Partners of Price Waterhouse gathered in London for their traditional Founder's Day lunch. The firm was founded on Christmas eve in 1849.

London: Bank Base: 7%
3-month Interbank: 7%+7%
3-month eligible bills: 8%+8%
1-year Pounds: 12%
Federal Funds: 22%
3-month Treasury Bills: 3.17-3.16%
30-year bonds: 103%-103%

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WEEKEND MONEY



PERSPECTIVES

Who came out of
1992 on top

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SNAKES & LADDERS

Hiss through our
political quiz game

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New Year bargains
around the country

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WIN A
FLIGHT TO
AMERICA
Page 6

WEEKEND

THE TIMES SATURDAY DECEMBER 26 1992

3

A spoonful of hope for Bosnia

**Ruth Gledhill sees
for herself how The
Times/1st AID
appeal can help
Europe's most
desperate cause**

Travnik, the former Turkish capital of Bosnia, was until recently, a trading centre for local farmers. The name itself means "place of grass", but that only applies in summer. At this time of year temperatures can fall to 20 degrees below zero, bringing the ice and snow that once made Travnik an ideal winter sports centre. This year there will be little play. Aid is desperately needed if babies, children and the elderly are to survive these freezing conditions.

On December 15 photographer Chris Harris and I travelled to Split to join a Feed the Children convoy carrying a load of baby food financed by 1st AID. The convoy consisted of a 16-ton lorry, Land-Rover, Range Rover and Ford Transit. We were to journey together to Vitez, and then separate to reach Travnik, Mostar and the Pazaric mental asylum.

We travelled inland from Split on the Adriatic coast through spectacular scenery of conifer woods, mountains and valleys, that gives no indication of the dismal conditions in villages near the front line. Many houses are boarded up; some villages have been almost completely flattened.

Among the children who play in one of Travnik's refugee centres, Ensud Hodovic plays more frantically than most. In the damp school room, formerly a monastery, a few miles from the front line and under frequent bombardment, he furiously chews on a lollipop.

Ensud, who is tall for his nine years, smiles to fight back the tears as he tells his story. "My home was killed in my house. I saw that I loved my grandfather very much. My father escaped. My mother and sister are here."

Ensud is one of 400 refugees in the school. Next door, another 200 live in a gymnasium. All are Muslims. I spent the night with the refugees in the gymnasium. They described how they have been shelled so frequently that the explosions have become almost as monotonous as they are terrifying. But even without the shelling, the conditions in which they now live would still be horrific.

They are fighting a losing battle against dirt and disease. There is only one working shower in the gym, in the former changing rooms. Condensation and cigarette smoke combine in freezing, stinking mist beneath which the refugees engage in an unending struggle simply to eat, stay clean and stay alive.

Rows of dripping clothes line the walls, hanging on strings just like Christmas cards hanging in a British home. Steam rises from the dark pools of dark water beneath the clothes. Neon lights flicker on the ceiling.

After being greeted by my hosts for the night, the Zenik family, I slumped on the blanket-covered mattress which serves them as kitchen, living room and bedroom. They had lost their home in Prijedor to the Serbs, and the whereabouts of the head of the family were unknown. I turned to see the youngest child, Jasmina, aged nine, pointing a sawn-off shotgun at my head. It belonged to



Hungry for help: an aid worker feeds young Jelena Milanovic in the Pazaric asylum, which has no electricity or heating, and is facing acute medical shortages

her brother, Budo, a soldier who had left the front line recently to work with the military police in Travnik. His reassurance that it was not loaded failed to calm me, and Jasmina continued to point the gun and laugh while we talked.

Only when our conversation moved on to the subject of war did Budo take the gun from her and cradle it in his arms like a baby.

Budo said he had seen Serb soldiers kill a baby, but insisted he himself had only killed Serbs in military uniform. "I kill because I kill because I want to help my people who are living here." Near by, as he spoke, soldiers on leave from the front line and visiting their families in the centre were drinking coffee.

Although Muslim, he resisted any suggestion that religion motivated him to fight. "I am a Bosnian. I do not want to be known as a Muslim. I do not want to fight in a jihad, a holy war. I do not want it to be a religious war. I want this war to stop. I am tired and these people are tired. But you should ask the Serbs if you want to know when it will end."

These members of the Zenik family are among more than 420,000 refugees in the area. They are not starving, but their diet of rice, water and pasta means malnutrition and trituration. They face an uncertain future in winter.

At 10pm, the whistle blew for lights out, but it was impossible to sleep properly. Racking coughs, muffled sobs and mutterings accompanied the cries and shouts from refugees who relived their ordeals in their dreams.

Dejvi Adznenovic, aged 20, has

survived two concentration camps. After five months of beatings and near-starvation, he is skeletal thin. He has been in the gymnasium for two weeks and still cannot believe he is alive.

They pretended to shoot at me, but aimed their bullets close by instead, to frighten me. They put me in a small room and beat me with rifle butts, with shoes, with anything, all over my body. It was because I am Muslim. I thought I would die and I was very sick in my stomach. I came here as part of a prisoner exchange. I cannot believe I am safe.

Two days later, on Sunday, we went on a reconnaissance trip with the Land-Rover, carrying aid to Mostar, the capital of Herzegovina. Since the 16th century, the town, with many of its beautiful buildings, has survived a major earthquake, Turkish rule, Venetian attacks, 18th-century riots and two world wars. Now Mostar has been almost completely destroyed by non-stop shelling. As we walked through the cobbled streets of the centre, once renowned for its craft trade, only two shops were open. One sold metalwork goods; the other was selling tourist guides, praising the beauties of the town — all around was waste and devastation. The effect was like seeing Stratford-upon-Avon in ruins.

As we handed out food and blankets to families living in burnt-out houses with neither roof nor windows, an air-raid siren sounded and the first shells for 15 days began to fall.

Our interpreter, Adnan Kolocic, aged 18, gestured towards the mountains which overshadow Mostar to the east, where Serb gunners have been stationed

for months. "The people who send these shells are not educated at all. They cannot even read or write."

We were standing in the former town centre, near the incredibly blue waters of the Neretva river. Refugees live in school houses and halls on the west bank, but we were unable to cross from the east with aid in the Land-Rover, because all five main bridges have been destroyed, leaving only a 600-year-old footbridge standing. Before the war, the half-Christian, half-Muslim population of Mostar was culturally united. Now the town is divided, but irrespective of beliefs and divisions, there will be no trees, no decorations and few presents for anyone this Christmas. The road to Mostar has opened only in the last few weeks, allowing aid to go through to central and northern Bosnia on passable roads for the first time.

If a ground war were to break out, this road, the main route from Croatia to central and northern

Bosnia, could be one of the first to be targeted by Serb forces intent on cutting off aid routes.

The convoy drivers know some routes through the backwoods. These are longer and more difficult, but get them to their destination in the end. We travelled on such a route to Vitez. It was a tortuous, muddy track through mountainous forest, made passable by British Army forces, the 35th Engineer Regiment and the 44th Field Support Squadron, stationed along the route.

The Rev Tyrone Hillary, Church of England chaplain to the British Forces in and around Vitez, has been liaising with local Christian and Muslim leaders to send in aid before the snows make the roads impassable.

In a country where the structures have all broken down," Padre Tyrone says, "when no one is quite sure which bits of the government work and which do not, where often those governments are corrupt or military-led, the priest or imam is the one person left. More often than not, they stay in the villages long after everyone else has gone. When they do leave, they leave with their people."

Feed the Children has brought a snow vehicle, supplied by Yamaha, to reach the isolated villages. Aid worker Alan Cheshire, a former sergeant in The Parachute Regiment who once ranked fifth in the world in snowmobile racing, will carry aid on sledges drawn behind the vehicle to the Pazaric asylum and surrounding villages. Forty patients have already died in the asylum this winter through cold and disease. They have no electric

THE TIMES

1ST AID

● 1st AID is a new appeal that asks people to make their first financial transaction of 1993 for somebody other than themselves.

● Co-ordinated by the World Memorial Fund for Disaster Relief, it is an international charity set up in 1989 by the late Group Captain Lord Cheshire with the backing of the United Nations. 1st AID plans for disasters by raising funds in advance, so as to be able to act to save lives in the crucial first hours.

● Bosnia is a typical example of how the appeal has already been able to deliver aid to where it is most needed. 1st AID financed the consignment of baby food that Ruth Gledhill accompanied in a convoy organised by Feed the Children, the UK charity which specialises in taking aid to children around the world.

● Earlier this month, the editor of *The Times* appealed to *The Times* top 1,000 companies to help 1st AID reach its £1 million fund-raising target on January 1. The January 1 issue of *The Times* will list all the companies that have contributed. Readers can make individual donations by telephoning the credit card hotline on 0272 226688 (24 hours); or by cheque/postal order payable to 1st AID and sent to 1st AID Appeal, c/o CAF Freepost, TN2 257, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5ER; or over the counter at any Bradford & Bingley Building Society or Midland Bank branch.

● The Charities Aid Foundation will be responsible for all aspects of banking and donation costs of 1st AID.

The BLAZER SALE...



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LATER THAT NIGHT BERTIE SET OFF AT GREAT SPEED FOR THE BLAZER SALE...

...STARTS
TODAY 11AM

Except Broadgate, Fenchurch Street and Canary Wharf.

The hazards of living in an age of safety

Our obsession with eliminating risk makes us nervous wrecks

Dido Farrell, a designer friend of mine, came back to find fire engines outside her house in Fulham, west London. A lodger had apparently flung down a hair dryer on to a duvet, although she claimed to have turned it off but to have left it plugged in.

I was once almost strangled when I shut a car door in which I had been getting a lift and trapped my long scarf in it, almost exiting this life like Isadora Duncan.

So is it any wonder that as a nation we are obsessed by safety? Anybody who has been abroad will have witnessed the contrast. "Safety last" seems to be the motto in places like Crete or Madeira, where you are allowed to take perilous tourist

routes round the side of dangerous mountains, with rubble scrabbling from under your feet.

My husband often wonders when looking at passing gardens from the train window, why people on modern estates prefer conifers to deciduous trees. He has developed the theory that it is because they do

not want the trees to grow through human height as they might fall on a pedestrian.

Even abstemious Britons may cut themselves on the ring-pulls of their low-alcohol lager cans, and just yesterday my husband cut his finger on a page of a coffee table book which he was given as a present. But, as I said, the older we get, the more alert to danger we become.

I had a marvellous great-aunt, who lived in Dublin until she died at 96. She lived alone in a house packed with desirable goods and with bar locks on every door. About twice a year, burglars made their way in through one of the windows downstairs but then could get no further. Because the only rooms a

burglar could easily enter through a downstairs window were the larder and the cloakroom, it meant that there was nothing there that they wanted. It was peculiarly gratifying to think of their frustration.

We had a bit of a disappointment recently when we went to Beaumaris, in Anglesey. For years we had enjoyed the exhilaration of walking the narrow walls of the castle there, but this year we found that the walls were closed following a safety inspection. Had someone fallen, we asked? Not in a thousand years, answered the man in the kiosk. He then gave us a lecture on acceptable safety barriers and how they have proved more difficult to design than expected.

In wartime Britain people spoke of the exhilaration of feeling "alive" because of the constant danger. Life is a bit duller these days.

FILM

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (U): Sumptuous Disney cartoon fairytale, blessed with skilled animation and attractive songs that might have sprung from a Broadway musical. Director, Gary Trousdale, Kirk Wise. Barbiican (071-638 8891) Curzon West End (071-439 4805) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Tooting Court Road (071-636 5148) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Odeon: Kensington (0426 914665) Mezzanine (0426 915683).



The Little Tramp: Robert Downey Jr plays Chaplin

BLADE RUNNER (15): The improved "director's cut" of Ridley Scott's influential vision of a dark, hellish LA, infested with rebel androids. Harrison Ford. Camden Plaza (071-485 2443). Gate (071-727 4043) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Shaftesbury Avenue (071-636 6279/379 7025) Screen on Baker Street (071-935 2772).

THE BODYGUARD (15): Kevin Costner as the bodyguard who falls for his showbiz charge (Whitney Houston). Jumbled drama, from a 1975 Lawrence Kasdan script. Director, Mick Jackson. Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) Empire (071-497 9999) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Haymarket (071-639 1527) MGM Oxford Street (071-434 0310) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Odeon: Kensington (0426 914665) Mezzanine (0426 915683) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

INTO THE WEST (PG): Two quirky children ride a mysterious white horse into western Ireland. Wayward but engaging; good for older children. Stars Gabriel Byrne, Ellen Barkin. Director, Chris Columbus. Barberian (071-638 8891) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Oxford Street (071-636 0310) Odeon: Kensington (0426 914665) Marke Arch (0426 91501) West End (0426 915574) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

HOME ALONE 2: LOST IN NEW YORK (PG): More of the same, with extra cruelty and a horrid new streak of sentimentality. With Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern. Director, Chris Columbus.

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PETER'S FRIENDS (15): College pals meet up after a decade for a glib mixture of laughter and tears. Kenneth Branagh directs Emma Thompson, Stephen Fry, Rita Rudner and himself. Lumière (071-636 0691) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-636 6148) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0310) Odeon: Kensington (0426 914665) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

SINGLE WHITE FEMALE (18): New roommate proves a crackpot. Nicely atmospheric, but the crudities mount. Bridget Fonda, Jennifer Jason Leigh; director, Barbet Schroeder.

MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Shaftesbury Avenue (071-836 6279/379 7025) Odeon: Kensington (0426 914665) Mezzanine (0426 915683).

SISTER ACT (PG): Whoopi Goldberg hides out in a convent. Contrived but disarmingly warm-hearted comedy. Director, Emile Ardolino.

MGM Baker Street (071-935 9772) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Oxford Street (071-636 0310) Odeon: Kensington (0426 914665) West End (0426 915574) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

SLACKER (15): College-age layabouts in Austin, Texas, vent crazy thoughts on life, the Smurfs and UFOs. Striking debut by film-maker Richard Linklater, with an amateur cast. Metro (071-437 0757).

THE CRYING GAME (18): IRA gunman becomes obsessed with a hostage's girlfriend. Bold, powerful Neil Jordan film that falters at the close. Stars Stephen Rea, Forest Whitaker, Jaye Davidson, Miranda Richardson. Chelsea (071-351 3742/3743) Curzon Phoenix (071-240 9661) MGM Pantown Street (071-930 0631).

DEATH BECOMES HER (PG): Meryl Streep and Goldie Hawn battle to attain eternal youth. Ice-cold black comedy, ultimately swamped by special effects. Stars Bruce Willis; director, Robert Zemeckis. Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) Empire (071-497 9999) MGM Baker Street (071-935 9772) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Odeon: Kensington (0426 914665) Mezzanine (0426 915683) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

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THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS (12): Romance and adventure in the American colonies with frontiersman Daniel Day-Lewis. Shallow version of the classic novel; director Michael Mann. With Madeleine Stowe, Russell Means. Metro (071-437 0757).

ALADDIN: Enjoyable panto with strong characters and foot-tapping songs. Theatre Royal Stratford East, Gerry Rafferty Square, London E15 (081-534 0310). Mon-Sat, 2.15pm and 7.15pm, from New Year's day. Tues-Sat, 2.15pm and 7.15pm.

BARNUM: Paul Nicholas walks the tightrope in Christmas revival of the Cy Coleman/Michael Stewart showbiz musical. Dominion, Tottenham Court Road, W1 (071-980 8845). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Wed and Sat, 3pm.

CAROUSEL: Joanne Riding and Michael Hayden star in triumphal revival of the Rodgers & Hammerstein fairground musical. National (Lyttelton), South Bank, SE1 (071-922 2521). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Tues, 2.15pm, Sat, 7.15pm.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS: Ian Judge's sublimely funny production back in London, with award-winning Desmond Barrit playing both portly twins. Barberian (071-638 8891). Mon-Sat, 7.15pm, mats Wed and Sat, 2pm.

MISS MURDER: Sharon Gless (ex-cop Cagney) unerves Bill Paterson in stage version of the Stephen King thriller. Criterion, Piccadilly Circus, W1 (071-839 4848). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats Wed, 8pm, Sat, 4pm.

PINCHY KOB AND THE SEVEN DUPPIES: The eight black actors of The Posse in a marvellously inventive variation on the Scrooge story. Recommended. Tricycle, 269 Kilburn High Road, NW6 (071-322 1000). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat Sat, 4pm.

THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE: The year's excursion to Narnia, by courtesy of Vanessa Ford Productions. Somewhat better than others in the collection. Royalty, Portugal Street, Kingsway, WC2 (071-494 5090). Various at 2.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm (closed New Year's day).

THE PRISONER OF ZENDA: David Haig plays the dashing Rudolph Rassendyll, spitting image of the King of Ruritania, in the best of all romantic adventures. Greenwich Theatre, Crooms Hill, SE10 (081-858 7755). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mat Sat, 2.30pm, except today and Mon, 2pm.

TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT: Simon Cadell, John Wells, Richard Kane, Christopher Gee play all 26 parts in Giles Havergal's marvellous adaptation of Graham Greene's novel. Wyndham's, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (071-867 1116). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 8.15pm, mats Wed, 3pm, Sat, 5pm.

REGIONAL

BIRMINGHAM: Helen Boxendale plays beautiful, tragic Lady Isobel Vane, whose misfortunes in *East Lynne* will melt a heart of stone. Birmingham Rep Studio, Centenary Square (021-236 4455). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mat Sat, 4.30pm.

HULL: New John Godber play takes the lid off the lechery at *The Office Party*. Spring Street Theatre, Spring Street (0482 224800). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mats Wed, next Sat and Jan 9 at 3pm.

GLASGOW: The Christmas show here is Myles Rudge's version of *The Jungle Book*, bold and colourful, directed by Giles Havergal. Citizens, Gorlae (041-429 0022). Mon-Sat, variously at 10am, 2pm and 7pm (closed New Year's day).

LEICESTER: Paul Kerrison brings the jets and the dogs together in *West Side Story*. Every song a hit. Haymarket, Belgrave Gate (0533 539797). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mat Wed and Sat, 4.30pm.

MOLDS: Charles Dickens' warning against being nasty to the staff on *Christmas Eve: A Christmas Carol*, with new music and lyrics. Theatre Chwyd (0352 755114). Various at 2pm and 7pm. OXFORD: Daydreaming Princess

MARILYN KINGWILL



Panto banter: Michael Bertenshaw and Alan Ford (Dame) in Aladdin (see Theatre)

CLASSICAL

BEACON EUROPE DAY: The Barbican celebrates the coming of the single European market with a day of concerts by the European Community Baroque Orchestra, playing favourites by Purcell, Alivon, Telemann, Bach and Handel (St Giles Church, Cripplegate, Thurs, 7.30pm); the London Symphony Orchestra (traditional Viennese New Year fare from the Strauss family, Barbican Hall, 7.30pm; repeated with slight variations on New Year's day at 3pm and 7.30pm); and the European Community Youth Orchestra under Vladimir Ashkenazy, with Friedrich Kempf, BBC Young Musician of the Year, at the piano (popular Wagner, Rachmaninov, Bartók and Ravel, Barbican Hall, 9.30pm). Barbican, Silk Street, London, EC2 (071-638 8891), New Year's eve.

THE KING'S CONSORT: Robert King directs a programme on the theme of "A German Christmas", featuring music by Bach, Telemann and Buxtehude. Wigmore Hall, Wigmore Street, London, W1 (071-935 2141) Tues, 7.30pm.

ROCK

BILLY BRAGG: The Bard of Barking returns to Hackney with the Red Stars for three gigs culminating in what should be the pick of the New Year's eve bashes. Canadian newcomers Bare Naked Ladies lend support. Hackney Empire, London, EB (081-935 2424). Tues, Wed and New Year's eve, 8pm.

S.E. ROGUE: The king of palm wine guitar music offers fine, rootsy African rhythms. Lemon Tree, Aberdeen (0224 642230). Mon, 7pm.

JOHN COOPER-CLARKE: Reunited with the Invisible Girls, the gaunt northern poet and singer plays a home town gig. Band on the Wall, Manchester (061-332 0183). Mon, 8.30pm.

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY: Gutsy soul diva Jean Carne fronts a night's funky entertainment. Camden Centre, London, NW1 (071-388 1394). New Year's eve, 8pm-2am.

JAZZ

SPIKE ROBINSON BAND: Expect intense melodies from this Zoot Sims-inspired tenor saxophonist. Bull's Head, London, SW13 (081-876 5241). Tonight, 8pm. **STAN TRACEY OCTET**: The distinctive pianist celebrates his birthday and the 50th anniversary of the first night he played jazz. Bull's Head (as above), Wed, 8.30pm.

MUSIC

OPERA

ALCINA

CINDERELLA

SCARBOROUGH

THE ADVENTURES OF MR BROUKE

DANCE

KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN

CINDERELLA

SCARBOROUGH

THE ADVENTURES OF MR BROUKE

DANCE

THE PRINCESS OF ZENDA

THE

Fat chance of a silent night for the farmyard nativity

By the time you read this, I gravely suspect that our young sow, Phoebe, will have caused us dreadful embarrassment. If you think your relations are awkward at Christmas, count yourself lucky.

Having reared her last litter of piglets to the ripe old age of ten weeks, Phoebe is now ready to give her undivided attention to the founding of the next litter. At least, I am ready for her to do so and there is little she can do to object, for I have loaded her into the trailer, hauled her round the pigsty and settled her on straw where the next love of her life awaits.

If this seems brusque, it is a far cry from the modern way of rearing litters, which removes suckling pigs from the sow at the tender age of three weeks. We leave ours to suck their mother till they are happy and plump, and of a size to knock her around if she fails to keep them

FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HSIEH

under control. Far from weeping at the loss of her offspring, I have never seen a pig go up the ramp of a trailer as fast as our Phoebe when she spotted an opportunity for a quick escape from a family Christmas. And if the remarriage seems to be a little swift after the family break-up, this is merely because pigs come into season two or three days after weaning and the opportunity must be seized.

I cannot think of any attractive way to describe the visiting Large Black boar. Even though there is little malice in him, there seems to be more than enough lurking menace to persuade me to move swiftly at feeding time. He is hefty, thick-set and very — er — masculine. He froths at the mouth. But

Phoebe adores him. Not that she takes it so to speak, lying down. She cavorts around the sty, kicking straw aside, squealing and giggling like a schoolgirl confronting her pop idol. And it is these squeals of porcine delight which I fear may lead to trouble for this year we have decided to hold a farmyard Nativity play. And what am I going to say to the audience if, halfway through "Silent Night", Phoebe gets a fit of the shrieking amorous giggles?

For the last couple of Christmases, I have never been able to sing a carol without realising what an ideal setting we could provide for a Nativity play. Our lambing sheds are built of grown timbers and thatched with warm straw; our



cattle eat their feed from real mangers; and when the frosts come we are only too familiar with earth as hard as iron, water like a stone. We even have the cast. Our eight-year-old daughter wishes to play

Mary but her ten-year-old brother will not be seen dead showing her any affection, and so refuses to play Joseph. He has decided to be the inn-keeper so that he can spend the entire play being grumpy. He will

doubtless take after his father and become a farmer.

Although I have been offered a donkey, it seems only proper that our Suffolk Punches should haul the blessed couple to the stable. Our farm-worker friend Derek is going to wrap himself in old sacking and lead the horses through the yard. We shall gather in a flock of young shepherds and they can abide with the long-suffering Dorset sheep around the shepherds' hut which we will place near the gate. The ewes are due to start lambing on New Year's day and I now regret not having sent the ram to work a couple of weeks sooner, so that a couple of early lambs might have completed the scene. I think our sheepdog, Flash, will have to abide in his kennel, for, although excellent with a flock, his relationship with others is strained, and I foresee a situation where the infant Jesus (borrowed doll) will be hauled

from the manger and dragged like a juicy bone into the corner. I did consider an impressionistic attempt to have our gloriously white cow, Sage, play the Angel Gabriel, but her calf would surely try to follow. We are trying to create an atmosphere of dreamless sleep with silent stars going by, not a roared.

As I write, the performance is tomorrow and I am keeping my fingers crossed that a noisy upsurge of passion in our Phoebe is not going to coincide with the dignified and hushed coming down of the Angel of the Lord. The only solution that crosses my mind if she does bellow is to drown her out with help from the bullocks. Lowing cattle are, after all, acceptable. In the end, if the worst should happen, I shall have to turn my back on the holy scene, replace my farmer's hat, and think of the lucrative litter to come. Glad tidings of great joy, for once, a profit cometh in the land.



Whipping in and moving off: after a warming stirrup cup, the huntmen, riders and hounds of the Beaufort hunt set off from the meet to draw the first cover

Confessions of a fox-hunter

Although ethics now prevent her from hunting, Annie Rankin still recalls the heady excitement of the Boxing day meet

This morning across the land, hounds will be whining, ponies whinnying and mares stamping impatiently. Hordes of followers, mounted and unmounted, will gather for the meet, steam rising from horses' rumps and riders' breath alike. Outside pubs, on village greens and in marketplaces, some 200 packs will rally to the call. For Boxing day is one of the high points on the hunt calendar and, weather permitting, promises the biggest turn out of the year.

What better way, some would say, to work off the seasonal excesses than by galloping across glorious countryside, the winter wind full in your face? I clearly recall, aged 12, the early mornings with bitter Scottish gusts biting my ears and sneaking between the folds of my stock; when two pairs of riding gloves and charcoal pocket-warmers did little to ward off the chill. Yet fortified by surreptitious gulps from someone's hip flask, I would chivvy my pony in pursuit of the pack.

The thrill of the chase is endlessly cited as a key factor in the hunt — and it is a tangible spur. How exhilarating it was to career along, ducking the clouds of mud thrown up by those in front, and keeping alert for low branches, hidden ditches and barbed wire.

There was nothing better than

following hounds in full cry. Then, you could soar to untold heights because all around were sailing over vast fences. At that time I viewed hunting as just an extension of the Pony Club — an opportunity to meet other riders in winter when there were few rallies or gymkhanae.

There was definitely tension in the air, but for me this was as much the fear that my over-excited pony might bolt and pass the master — thereby committing a cardinal sin of hunting. Even the curious ritual of being bloodied (an honour usually bestowed on the youngest person at the kill) did not strike me as unpleasant. I never earned a brush but I did get a fox pad, which became a precious memento.

My home was close to the kennels, and sometimes we would "walk" young hounds (take them in while they are weaned). I remember my distress when two black-and-tan pups mauled my prize bantams. But the henhouse was also a magnet for numerous foxes over the years. There seemed a certain rough justice in the natural world.

When my favourite gelding died, I ensured he was taken by the

kernels and fed to the hounds. It did not seem a gruesome practice because all around were sailing over vast fences. At that time I viewed hunting as just an extension of the Pony Club — an opportunity to meet other riders in winter when there were few rallies or gymkhanae.

Like many hunting enthusiasts, I enjoyed it primarily for the unbridled excitement, the unpredictability and for the stunning scenery. But blood lust is inextricably bound up with it. Rare was the day that my scruffy hunt caught a fox, but there was still a sense of purpose and anticipation. Few would contend that a good gallop with friends, even with challenging fences, could make an adequate substitute.

For its many opponents, hunting stands for everything objectionable about our class-ridden society:

landed gentry dressed up in the nines and lording it on horseback, forcing beasts to a protracted death — and then calling it the sport of Kings. But that is an emotive and extreme view. Most workday hunts are open to anyone who can ride, and few are prohibitively expensive. The cap (or day's fee) ranges from £5 or £6 to about £60 with the smartest packs.

Today, after mature reflection, I stand firmly on the far side of the

fence. I find it ethically unacceptable to subject any animal to such a drawn out, cruel end. Yes, foxes often escape but, with terrier-men blocking up their lairs the previous night to prevent them going to ground, the odds are unfairly stacked. And cub-hunting, in which immature hounds are set to work on young fox cubs, is quite barbaric.

I have seen some of the savage things animals do to each other in the wild, but as I cannot stomach the sight of an exhausted fox being torn limb from limb by a ravenous pack, I no longer participate. Still, I can hardly condemn others for relishing what I spent many happy days pursuing. I may listen wistfully to accounts of a good day out, but I cannot personally reconcile it with my conscience.

Blood lust is an intrinsic part of our human make-up, and we should be prepared to acknowledge this. Yet there are many base urges we would be well advised not to act upon. There are, after all, many activities that bring as much exhilaration — tackling a steep ski-slope, climbing a mountain, even going for a run — none of which relies on ritualised slaughter.

Recently I was speaking with someone who had once been an avid hunt saboteur. For him it had been part of being young and rebellious. He had seen it as an exciting day out in the country and had taken it up almost without question. It brought with it all the gratification of espousing a just cause as well as giving free rein to a radical impulse.

Years later, he says he would not go out sabbing and, while still opposed to hunting, has come to see that those who hunt do not out of bloodthirsty motives, but are as much a product of their background as he himself is. This is not offered as a glib appraisal of all hunt saboteurs, many of whom are committed to a considered philosophy; but I was struck by the echoes of my own altered perspective. We had moved from two polar positions — both unthinking, heady entertainment — to a greater understanding of a complex topic.

Ethical questions demand a personal response, and nobody has a prerogative on them. We are ultimately accountable only to ourselves. So, while I object to the principle, the Boxing day meet — with its pink coats and topcoats, shaggy ponies and anorak-clad groups — brings back joyful memories. Indeed, for many country people it is an integral part of the seasonal cycle.

Everyone knows the first rule of hangover prevention: drink a quart of water before you go to bed. If you get up in the night — and you will if you have drunk a quart of water — drink some more. Drink more still when you wake up. The sooner you rehydrate, the sooner the little men with hammers will stop attacking the inside of your skull.

Some people substitute black coffee for water, but this is a mistake. The caffeine provides a quick lift but, in quantity, can do an uncertain stomach no good at all. Cures range from a couple of Alka Seltzers — for the headache and the sulky stomach — to exotic concoctions of food and drink, and to exercise — a brisk walk or the Amis method. (Prince Philip took a bicycle ride on the morning after his stag night. He got to the church, not only on time but in good form.)

A hair of the dog that bit you works for some people, but there are dangers. The remedy comes from the Roman belief that if you were bitten by a dog and the bite turned nasty, the only cure was to swallow a hair from the same dog. I have always thought that yanking out a hair might spur the dog to bite you again and the same applies to alcoholic hangover cures. You may feel better for a time, but if you swallow several hairs the hangover will return with reinforcements.

If you do choose this option, do not go for one of those concoctions that involve three shots of different drinks, whatever Keith Floyd advises in his new book, *Floyd on Hangovers* (Michael Joseph £7.99). That way leads to a sine wave of alcoholic highs and hangovers lows.

Floyd's Corpse Reviver contains equal parts of brandy, Fernet Branca (Italian bitters), slightly stronger than standard whisky and white crème de menthe, a

pepper and a dash of tabasco. Some add a raw egg yolk. • Guinness with a raw egg in it. This is an Irish nostrum.

• Pick-me-up: half a measure dry Martini, half of pastis.

• Campari: one measure drunk without soda for mouth-tightening shock effect.

• Dutch gin (Genever): one measure of this heavily flavoured gin taken straight with a pickled herring.

• Underberg: an unpleasant German cure pugs sell in miniature bottles. Take it with soda unless you feel the guilty need to punish yourself.

• Gin-and-tonic with juice of half a lime or lemon, plus a teaspoonful of sugar if you really cannot swallow it. Taken with two water biscuits.

Food hangover cures fall into two groups: bland, comforting nursery dishes and what you might call shock assault nosh.

The nursery option includes macaroni cheese, scrambled eggs on toast, soft-boiled egg with soldiers and thick vegetable soup, heavy with potatoes.

Shock food subdivides into fried-and-fatty and sharp-and-tangy. Many people swear by a transport-cash fry-up breakfast for group one, while group two includes kippers (which will encourage you to drink more water), devilled kidneys, pickled onions and pickled herrings.

If you are planning a hangover, you might get in a bottle of some stuff that generations of clubmen around St James's have come to call the Queen Mother's cure, though there is no evidence that she has ever had a hangover, except the fact that she comes from Scotland.

The cure comes in a bottle labelled "Pick-Me-Up" and is sold by D.R. Harris, the chemist in St James's Street, which holds the Queen Mother's warrant. Her "by appointment" crest appears on the small bottle, which contains eye-opening ingredients like camphor and ammonia. You take a table-spoonful in a wineglass of water, and I can testify that it has an instant head-clearing effect. Perhaps mind-blowing would be a better word.

The 100ml bottle costs £4.80 and, for regular sufferers, there is a 600ml bottle at £15.90.

Cheers!

FRANK JEFFREY

Feather report

Early claims for the spring

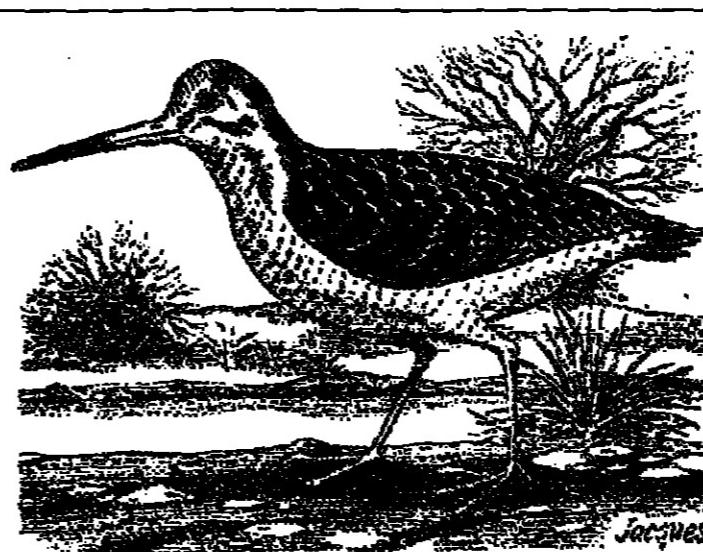
A WALK down the lane and into the wood on Boxing day morning — what is it likely to offer? Before dawn, a song thrush will have been singing in the treetops, and provided the wind is not too strong, a great tit may be singing in the garden too — "teacher, teacher" it seems to cry. Both birds are setting up their spring breeding territories, warning other males that they are in possession of this particular garden and letting passing females know that they will soon be looking for a mate.

Out on the road, a small brown bird with pink feet runs back under the hedge like a mouse. It is a Dunnock, or hedge sparrow. It is no relation at all to the house sparrow, though it might be mistaken for a female house sparrow but for its fine insect-eater's beak. The Dunnocks are not singing much yet, but they pipe vigorously in the hawthorn twigs.

Under the roadside trees farther

along, other birds are feeding. Most of them are chaffinches, the males with pink breasts and blue caps. They walk about perily, or run fast, but never hop —这是 the style of the chaffinch. The main thing to look out for when the birds fly up is a white rump and a yellow armpit. That will be a Brambling, and if you get a good view of it in the tree you will see the bright breast, more orange than the chaffinch's. The Bramblings come down from Scandinavia in search of beech mast, and sometimes descend on the beech forests of Switzerland in hundreds of thousands.

Turning into the wood, the first thing you hear is a soft, lip-



Clatter: disturbed, the woodcock will burst out of the brambles

crashing through the undergrowth and also making a strange paper-tearing sound with their wings. Their heavy brown shape twists in and out of the trees, but usually settle again quite quickly. So if you are prepared to push through the brambles — just as thorny now as at any time of the year — you may have a second chance of seeing this strange wader of the woods.

DERWENT MAY

• What's about: *Birders* — look out for grey wagtails in towns and cities. *Twitchers* — white-throated sparrow. *Market Rasen, Lincolnshire*. Details from Birdline 0898 700222.

OUT OF TOWN

Discover the diversions of single malts

Many years ago I won fame as a drinks writer because, alone among a distinguished company, I managed in a blind tasting to sort six whiskies from six cognacs. At that time wine critics and beer buffs did not realise you could not taste spirits by filling your mouth with them.

My instinctive success as a natural "nose" would win little credit these days. Now, to be accounted any sort of whisky connoisseur, you have to be able to distinguish not just whisky from cognac but grain from malt, and among malts which region of Scotland it comes from, how it has been aged, for how long, and possibly even which individual distillery produced it.

Malting the barley, mashing the malt, fermenting the wort

It is not a game at which I can claim to have many great successes, but it isn't half fun to play, as *The Times*/Aberlour malt whisky competition proves.

The point is that malt whiskies from Scotland are now as diverse and as intriguingly diverting as claret from Bordeaux. These are truly the *grands crus* of the British Isles.

They differ so much because all single malts have to be the product of one distillery and made exclusively from malted barley. The nuances arise because there are so many different ways of malting the barley, mashing the malt, fermenting the wort, and distilling the whisky. Even then the spirit may be matured in casks which contained different drinks, most importantly bourbon and different varieties of sherry, all of which donate quite different tastes to the finished product.

The water supply to each distillery plays an important part.

Keeping a cool head when all about are losing theirs over whisky: a natural noser, Robin Young does it instinctively



Whisky: not the only good thing that comes out of Scottish water, salmon fishing on the Spey

So does the particular nature of any local peat used in kilning. Whisky enthusiasts claim they can detect the influence of kelp, ozone and sea spray on whiskies matured near the shore, and cold mountain locations are said to help produce particularly rich, clean whiskies.

While many whisky drinkers remain conservatively loyal to some brand chosen originally, perhaps, for sentimental reasons, enthusiasts want to try everything at least once. Nowadays, though, even the most persistently inquisitive taster must find it difficult to keep up with the release of newly uncovered rarities, special releases, limited editions, cask sam-

ples, and vintage distillations. Recent curiosities, for example, have included a Glengoyne not just of a particular year, but of a particular day — Christmas Day 1967. Scottish distilleries used to work on Christmas Day, and in 1967 Glengoyne made enough to fill 2,500 bottles. They went on sale this year at £85 each.

While many whisky drinkers

The Glen Mhor distillery in Inverness was knocked flat to accommodate a new B & Q store, but its 1975 vintage lives on, a taste of the past, at £33.

Similarly the launching by the specialist bottlers, Gordon & MacPhail, of an Inverness malt from the Lowlands, hitherto one of hardest malts to find, coincided poignantly with the mothballing of the distillery (which is within Ballantine's plant at Dumbarton).

This year malt whisky fanciers even gained a connoisseurs' tasting glass designed specially for them by Georg Riedel, the Austrian crystal manufacturer who has previously busied himself designing special shapes and sizes to show off to greatest advantage each of the world's

Detecting the influence of kelp, ozone and sea spray

great wine styles.

And now, logical conclusion, there are whisky aficionados experimenting with malt whisky partnerships with food. The Keepers of the Quaich, most exclusive of whisky clubs, have approved 10-year-old Aberlour, for example, with quail terrine; Springbank 1979 with roast loin of venison; Bowmore from Islay with lamb in madeira sauce; and 18-year-old Macallan (purists prepare to reel) with bitter chocolate flummery and morello cherries.

Others maintain the advantages of peaty Lagavulin poured over vanilla ice cream. Strathmill as a substitute sweet-and-sour sauce with chillies, or a lot of Tullibardine with the Christmas pudding.

And at the end of the meal, if you follow a sip or two of coffee while your mouth is still warm with a dram of whichever malt is closest to hand, you will find that it goes over just like velvet.

Some of the secrets revealed



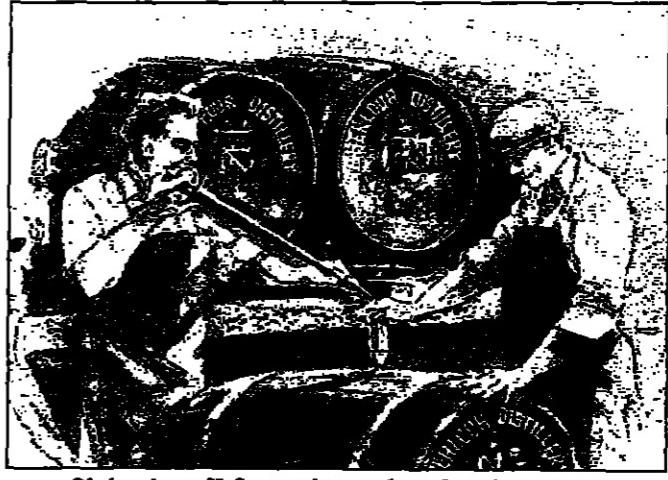
Serenading the whisky: Aberlour's master distiller

Aberlour is a single Highland Malt Scotch Whisky which gives a delicate balance between richness and lightness on the palate. Another factor in the maturation of the whisky is Kenny Fraser, Aberlour's Master Distiller, who serenades the casks each night in the warehouse with the sound of his bagpipes.

The flavour of the whisky is also said to be effected by the shape of the potstill. Whenever the giant "ketles" have to be replaced, distillers carefully add the exact same pattern of bumps and dents to the flask so as not to distort the flavour.



Recreated: the bumps and dents on the potstill



Siphoning off: for testing and tasting the whisky

Can you tell the peaches from the peat?

Test your knowledge and then your nose, taste wonderful whiskies in Scotland

and become Britain's 1993 malt whisky buff



Not just a cure for a cold: test your nose and your palate in the warmth of the Christmas spirit

The search is on for *The Times* Aberlour Malt Whisky Buff 1993. The competition, now an annual event launches the quest for a new malt champion.

Single malt lovers throughout the UK will be given an opportunity to knock the reigning champion, Mark Wooven, from his throne — no mean task as he has won the competition for two years running. He is still to embark on his trip of a lifetime to Australia to compete in the Aberlour Ashes, a nose to nose, palate to palate competition with the Australian master of malt.

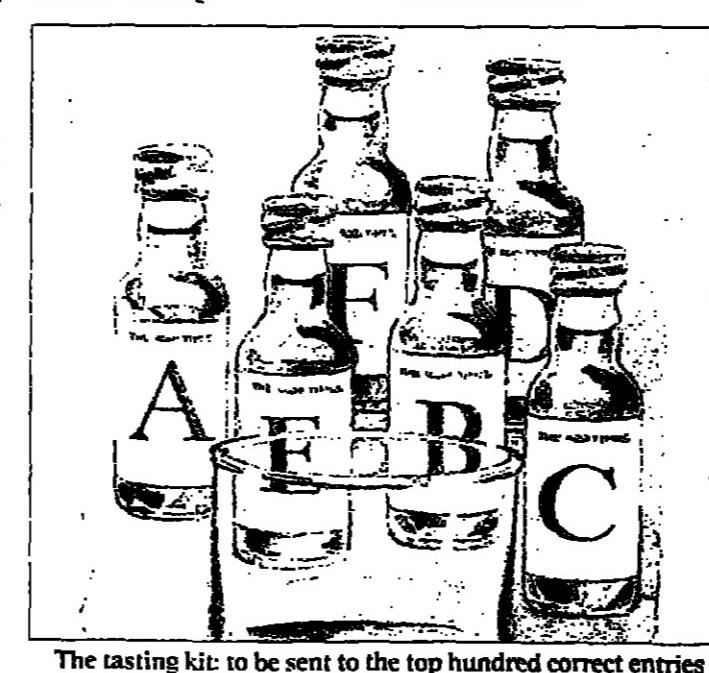
The quietly spoken accountant from Wiltshire has a nose to be proud of. He has beaten the best of British, architects from Somerset, dentists from Middlesex and journalists from London. He has even beaten numerous Scots who won places in the final, including a retired doctor from Edinburgh and two guest house owners from Banff.

According to the champion himself, he has always had a well-developed sense of smell — even as a child he tested everything given to him to eat by its smell first. Curiously though, he did not discover the joys of single malt whiskies until 1985 when he had tried them as a suggested cure for a bout of flu. Having recovered from his illness, he realised that they were far too good to be drunk for medicinal purposes only.

So Aberlour Single Malt and *The Times* are throwing down the gauntlet. If you enjoy your single malts and know your Islays from your Speysides and your Lowlands from your Highlands then follow your nose to the heart of Speyside this spring and become *The Times* Aberlour 1993 Malt Buff.

QUESTIONS

- How long does the spirit need to mature before it can legally be called "whisky"?
 - 10 years
 - 1 year
 - 3 years
- Which area boasts over half of Scotland's distilleries?
 - Speyside
 - Skye
 - Cowlands
- Who wrote "Whisky Galore"?
 - Compton Mackenzie
 - Robbie Burns
 - Robert Louis Stevenson
- Which of the following malts could be described as "Oradian"?
 - Highland Park
 - Talisker
 - Glen Ord
- How high above sea level is the Dalwhinnie distillery?
 - 843 ft
 - 1,339 ft
 - 1,073 ft



The tasting kit to be sent to the top hundred correct entries

HOW TO ENTER

To enter simply answer the 30 questions below. All entrants will receive an Aberlour miniature and a £2 off next purchase of Aberlour, redeemable at any retail store.

The first 100 correct (or nearest correct) entrants go through to the second round. We will send each of these top 100 a blind tasting kit of six whiskies.

Entrants are then asked to critically analyse and appreciate the contents of each of the six whiskies marked A to F.

The six competitors closest to the correct solutions will move into third and final round. They will fly with their partners to Aberlour on Speyside to enjoy a weekend of nosing, tasting and spitting at the distillery and the Craigellachie Hotel.

This final round comprises several tasting exercises incorporating various areas of production, processing and ageing. This will take place over the weekend of April 17/18, 1993.

Aberlour, situated on the banks of the River Spey and tucked into a steep little valley, is in the very heart of Scotland's finest malt producing region. It is a distilling village

which produces the only single malt to have won the International Wine and Spirit Gold Medal twice.

The most successful applicants will be awarded the title *"The Times" Aberlour Malt Whisky Buff 1993*" and will win a weekend for two to a European destination of their choice.

Please send your multiple choice answers on a postcard to The Aberlour Distillery, Aberlour, Banffshire, Scotland, AB3 9PG. Answers should arrive at the distillery no later than Monday January 18, 1993.

RULES

The competition is open to all residents of the United Kingdom who are aged 18 and over. Employees of *Times Newspapers Ltd* and its subsidiary companies, and their families, Campbell Distillers Ltd and its associated companies, and their families, are not eligible. There is no cash alternative. The judge's decision is final. Standard *Times Newspapers Ltd* competition rules apply and are available on request.

Boxing clever with leftovers

Frances Bissell, the Times cook, stretches the Christmas feasting

THE French often refer to *Part d'accorder les restes*. In Britain, I am not sure that we have ever regarded using up leftovers as an art, more a way of feeding the family on odds and ends after feast days. But turkey sandwiches, turkey rissoles and turkey and chips begin to pall after a few days. Here are some ideas for dressing cooked leftovers in an appetising enough guise to set before the most discerning palate. Some will lend themselves to larger-scale entertaining and the recipe quantities can be doubled, or more, if you have copious leftovers.

For those who have uncooked turkey portions left over, or other poultry or game, I have included a recipe for game sausage, if you have access to a butcher who makes his or her own sausages and who might be willing to let you have a few feet of sausage casing. If you do not, make it in a terrine.

Fruity, sharp accompaniments go well with cooked meat, from cranberries to pickled cabbage. The former go well with turkey, while the richer duck and goose are well-matched with pickled cabbage, or even better, with sauerkraut. I usually keep a jar or vacuum pack of sauerkraut in the store cupboard, as it makes such excellent instant meals with a grilled pork chop, smoked pork loin or sausages and boiled potatoes. It is not expensive and is available in most supermarkets and delicatessens.

Cooked meat from dark game, such as venison, hare or wild duck, will mix with leftover gravy or rich stock, some fried mushrooms and a flavouring of herbs and spices, to make a good sauce for pasta. We had goose for Christmas last year, and with the leftovers I made a goose lasagna, but with a slight difference. One of our guests is on a gluten-free diet so, instead of sheets of wheat lasagna, I sliced thinly peeled celeriac root and blanched the slices before layering them with the rich goose sauce. It was an excellent combination of flavours and certainly looked like a lasagna. Large slices of celeriac will substitute for crêpes or canapé. I fill them with a mixture of chopped, cooked hare and plenty of sausages, topped with a grating of cheese, and bake them.

Christmas pudding sliced, fried in butter, dusted with icing sugar, and served with ice-cream or brandy butter is the easiest way of using it up afterwards. But there are other ways of serving it the second time around, which disguises it even more successfully, if that is what you are after.

The first recipes suggest buffets and food to serve with aperitifs or elevenses. As a change from sparkling wines and champagne I like sherry. Among my favourites are Barbadillo's light and fragrant Manzanilla and the older Manzanilla Pasada, from Sanlúcar.

● **PARTY WHITES**
Sélection Blanc, Georges Duboeuf, Marks & Spencer £2.99

Invigorating crisp, zesty French fruit makes the king of Beaujolais party white, with its pretty flower label, a wine to remember and an M & S triumph.

Randall Bridge, Penfolds, The Victoria Wine Company £2.99

The high street's top cheap Australian white makes a first-class party wine with its deep, buttery, spicy semillon fruit. Partiers may prefer to usher in the New Year with the light, floral, citrusy Willow Court, a £2.99 English wine, going up to £3.59 on January 4.

1992 Namagua Colombar, Oddbins £2.99

The Cape's light, zesty, floral aperitif white from the Vredendal co-operative delivers the flavour and style of wines at twice the price. The 1991 Castillo de Olite, Navarra white from Spain (£2.99) is an elegant smoky, apple-lemon alternative.

Safeway Semillon, New South Wales, £2.65 until January 2, then £2.85

Splendid, soft, spicy lemon-curd flavours make this another top Australian party white.

● **PARTY REDS**
Sélection Rouge, Georges Duboeuf, Marks & Spencer £2.99

Pretty label and appealing plummy, fruity style make this a top French party red.

Safeway California Red, Safeway £2.85

Brilliant purple red and soft plum and cherry-scented California fruit put this all-American red ahead of the pack.

Lekta Almeria, Portman, Victoria Wine £1.99, Gateway £1.99 until January 4, then £2.35, Oddbins £2.99

Astonishingly good, ridiculously cheap Portuguese red is the best cut-price party wine of the season.



DIANA LEADBETTER

Flowers bloom over the river

Covent Garden is busy in Nine Elms

Ella Doolittle has gone from the church porch with her flowers, never to return; and where the potato porters once struggled through the old, crowded Covent Garden market the pizza now reigns. But Covent Garden market still lives, away on the other bank of the river, glimpsed from the railway viaduct as the train comes into Victoria.

It is still a public market, and anyone can walk into its vast sheds for nothing. The flower market is about five minutes walk along the Wandsworth Road from Vauxhall Tube station; the fruit and vegetable market another five minutes on. Life begins early there. The



traders are laying out their colourful and fragrant boxes between two and three in the morning, and soon after that the florists and greengrocers of greater London start arriving in their vans to buy the day's produce. Covent Garden is overwhelmingly a wholesale market. But there is a place for the curious visitor, or small private buyer, and the best time to go is at about seven in the morning. The place is still bustling, the traders are still at their stalls, but they will have a bit more time for someone who just wants a box of satsumas or cut roses.

The flower market is an enchanting place. It is like a great oriental tent, with many of the flowers spread out on the floor. Heavy, padded doors that open when you stand in front of them keep the place at an even temperature of 11-13°C for the blooms, and the old Covent Garden bell-hangs above the clock in the middle.

There are roses and carnations all the year round. At present there are plenty of chrysanthemums and poinsettias.

In the vegetable market, an amazing array of delectable edibles is heaped up on either side of the two long walkways that constitute this part of the market: strawberries from Verona and Western Australia, plums from California, lemons in many-coloured tissue paper from Turkey. You can get a 20lb box of Spanish clementines for £6, two dozen Brittany artichokes for £1.80.

This is a great professional market now, one that would have burst the seams of the old squares by the Opera House. But it is still a place of spirit and charm — and well worth driving to on the empty roads of dawn.

DERWENT MAY

Valdespino's Fino Inocente and Lustau's Almancenista Oloroso Viejo from the Viuda Borrega's bodega in Jerez. I would stay with sherry for the pudding and serve a Pedro Ximénez or a Dark Cream.

Turkey popovers
(makes 12-18)
2 eggs
4 lb/110g flour
1/2pt/280ml milk
2oz/60g suet, chopped
pinch of cinnamon and ground cloves
1tsp sugar
2tbsp turkey gravy, or stock
3tbsp cranberry jelly for glazing

Line the tart tins with pastry, prick the base and bake blind for ten minutes at 180°C/350°F, gas mark 4. Remove from oven, and allow to cool slightly. Crumble the stuffing and place in the base of each tart. Mix turkey with the other ingredients and spoon into the tarts. Smooth surface. Put the cranberry jelly in a saucer pan with a tablespoon of water, and cook until the jelly has melted. Brush liberally over the turkey, and bake for 10-15 minutes more at the same temperature. Remove from oven, let cool and re-glaze with rest of the jelly. Allow to set before serving.

Goose and sauerkraut salad
(serves 4-6)
1lb/455g drained sauerkraut, rinsed, if you prefer
4tbsp/70ml walnut oil
1tbsp cider vinegar

Make a smooth batter with the eggs, flour and milk. Grease deep bun tins with turkey dripping, if you have any, otherwise with butter, and place a little in each hollow. Put in a hot oven at 200°C/400°F, gas mark 6, for five minutes. Stir the turkey and stuffing into the batter. When the tin is very hot, spoon the batter to about two-thirds full and return to the oven. Bake until puffed up and deep, golden brown, which will take 15-20 minutes. Remove from the oven and serve with a little cranberry sauce in the middle of each popover. Good as snacks, elevenses or canapés with drinks, two or three popovers, served on a plate with a small, dressed salad makes a good starter, as does the next recipe.

Cranberry glazed turkey tarts

(makes 12-18)

1lb/230g shortcrust pastry
4 lb/110g turkey stuffing
4 lb/230g cooked diced, or shredded turkey
3oz/85g toasted pine nuts, or chopped walnuts
2oz/60g suet, chopped
pinch of cinnamon and ground cloves
1tsp sugar
2tbsp turkey gravy, or stock
3tbsp cranberry jelly for glazing

Line the tart tins with pastry, prick the base and bake blind for ten minutes at 180°C/350°F, gas mark 4. Remove from oven, and allow to cool slightly. Crumble the stuffing and place in the base of each tart. Mix turkey with the other ingredients and spoon into the tarts. Smooth surface. Put the cranberry jelly in a saucer pan with a tablespoon of water, and cook until the jelly has melted. Brush liberally over the turkey, and bake for 10-15 minutes more at the same temperature. Remove from oven, let cool and re-glaze with rest of the jelly. Allow to set before serving.

Game sausage
(serves 8-10)

2 pheasant legs and thighs
2 rabbit hindquarters
chicken thighs
and drumsticks or turkey thighs or drumsticks
2 wild duck legs
1lb/230g chicken livers
1lb/230g belly pork
2 shallots or 1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 free-range egg yolks
1tbsp fresh herbs, finely chopped
2oz/60g fresh breadcrumbs
seasoning
sausage casing and game stock for poaching

Remove all the meat from the bones, using these for stock. Pick

out some neat pieces of meat to dice small. Put these, about 4oz/110g in all, to one side with two chicken livers, trimmed and diced. Chop the belly pork and fry until the fat runs. Add to the pan the remaining chicken livers and undiced meat and cook through.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly. Put in a food processor with the shallots or onion, egg yolks, herbs and breadcrumbs, together with a little seasoning. Blend until smooth. Mix with the diced meat and chicken livers.

Spoon or pipe the mixture into sausage casings, tying and cutting at regular intervals. Poach the sausages gently in game stock for 12-15 minutes. Remove, and put to one side to cool. Serve on individual plates with salad leaves and relish or fruit jelly.

Alternatively, line a loaf tin with thin, rindless slices of un-smoked bacon, pack in the mixture, top with a bay leaf, and cook in the oven in a bain-marie for 20-25 minutes. Remove, let cool, weight down and serve in slices. If you can get cauf au lait, the mixture can also be used to make game faggots. While this recipe is best made with a mixture of meat, a single meat, such as turkey, can be used. In this case, I would add a little extra in the way of texture with some unsalted pistachios or walnuts and flavour with extra spices and herbs.

Christmas pudding surprise

(serves 6)

6 x 1/2in/1cm slices of Christmas pudding, cut to the base of an individual ramekin
rum, brandy, or other liqueur
1lb/455g best quality vanilla ice-cream
2 free-range egg whites
3oz/85g caster sugar

Place the pieces of pudding in the base of ramekins. Moisten with spirit or liqueur. Spoon in the ice-cream, leaving 1/4in/0.5cm at the top. Flatten the surface, and freeze the ramekins until the ice-cream is hard. Whisk the egg whites to firm peaks with half the sugar, fold in the rest of the sugar, and whisk until fully incorporated. Remove the ramekins from the freezer, place on a baking tray, and top each with a heap of meringue which should meet the edge of the ramekin. Bake for 8-10 minutes in the middle of the oven, preheated to 180°C/350°F, gas mark 4. Serve immediately.

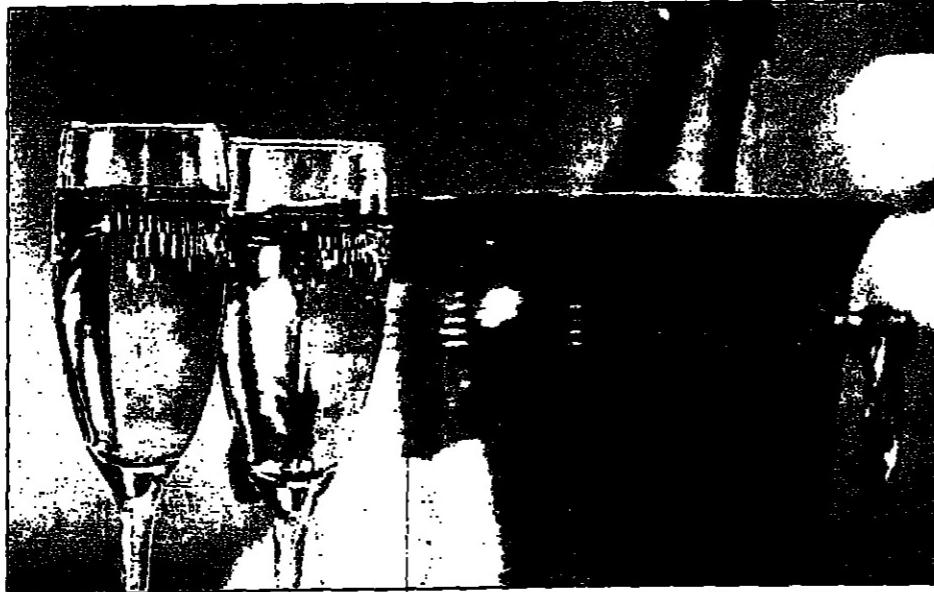
Christmas pudding trifles

These are very easy to make. Take a

tablespoon of leftover pudding, place it on a square of cling film, draw the edges to the centre and twist tightly until the pudding forms a round ball. To avoid crumpling, add a little extra spirit or liqueur. Finish the trifles by rolling in cocoa, icing sugar, castor sugar or melted chocolate.

Bubble and cheap

Jane MacQuitty raises a glass to the new year season with the best buys for party-givers and their guests



Make the party go with a fizz: there are still bargains to be had in sparkling wines

Ryans Creek, Hill-Smith, Victoria Wine £2.99
Randall Bridge's partner is the juicy-spicy blackcurrant fruit of this Australian red.

PARTY FIZZ
Bucks Fizz, Sainsbury's £1.99, buy two save 50p until January 3

Snoes will hate the fizzy, slightly tingly, orange flavours of this useful party wine. The rest of us will be grateful for its popularity and low price. On sale everywhere, Sainsbury's blend is better than most. Serve very well chilled.
Moscato Piemonte, Tesco £1.99, Sainsbury's £1.59 Little choose between Tesco and Sainsbury's cheap, juicy, grapey, soft sweet fizz that is good with parties and puddings.

G.F. Cavalier Brut, Safeway £3.59, Majestic Wine Warehouse £3.79, Oddbins £3.99

Like or loathe it, light, clean, appley, almondly Cavalier is still the best and cheapest dry French party sparkler available. Hangover-free, Cavalier acquires extra class, served with fresh orange juice to make bucks fizz, or Guinness to make black velvet.
Lonsdale Ridge, Bibendum, 113 Regents Park Road, London NW1. £3.99 Christmas 1992's best party sparkler, reduced from £4.98 to £3.99 for the festivities and even down £1 on last year's price, is this sell-out Australian. Fresh stocks of this warm, buttery, lemon and pineapple layered fizz are in now.

SUPERIOR PARTY FIZZ
Killawarra Brut, Davisons £4.56 in cases, £9.99 a bottle

Heaps better than the Angas Brut alternative, Killawarra's exotic, citrusy, lime, peach and lemon dominated fruit has wide party appeal. The rosé is pleasant and vaguely strawberry redolent.
Angas Brut, Oddbins £4.71 if you buy seven bottles, otherwise £4.99. Majestic £4.94 unsplit cases, £5.49 a bottle Waitrose £5.45 Average Australian fizz with some sunny, biscuity fruit that is too expensive at £5.99 but starts to look more like it at £4.71. The rosé version is just about OK too at this price.
Le Baron de Beaumont Chardonnay Brut, Waitrose £5.45 For one fizz around a fiver, the

Baron, with its elegant, fresh, pineapple-like fruit, has no competitors.

CHAMPAGNE

Paul d'Hurville, Victoria Wine £9.99

This winter's best cheap party champagne, if such a luxury notion exists, despite its £1 price increase, is still Victoria Wine's wondrous, fresh, waxy-biscuity, non-vintage, black grape-dominated bubbly.
Sainsbury's Extra Dry Champagne, Duval Leroy, Sainsbury's £9.99 until January 3

Still the top cheap supermarket bubbly, with deep, rich, flowery fruit. One of Duval Leroy's best blends yet.

Laurent Perrier, Bibendum £14.50 until January 4, cases only, Majestic Wine £14.56 unsplit cases, otherwise £17.65. Oddbins £15.16 if you buy seven bottles, otherwise £17.69.

Best value grandes marques champagne around. Lovely fruity-appley style with real class and finesse.

LOW/NO ALCOHOL

Lexton Low Alcohol Chardonnay, Medea Valley, Safeway £2.29 until January 2, then £2.59

For those who know that some of their guests will have to drive home on New Year's eve, it is as well to lay in a few low-alcohol supplies besides fruit juice and water. This 1.2% alcohol wine is not great but it is the best of its kind.
Lexton De-alcoholised Sparkling Brut, Medea Valley, Safeway £1.49

The fizzy version of the Australian wine above has even less alcohol, 0.5%, and its agreeable lemon-peachy, off-dry style works well.
Giacobazzi Lambrusco Light, Waitrose £1.69

The rock-bottom priced, 3% alcohol, lightly pebbled white has better than most sweet, grapey, barley-sugar flavours. And the red is OK.

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Disco church swings into its devotions

Ruth Gledhill joins the worshippers who let their hair down amid music and dance

Musama Disco Christo Church, the Methodist Church, Mostyn Road, Brixton, south London. UK office: 40 Brailsford Road, London SW2 2TE (081-674 3999)

PASTOR: Rev Jeridan Hartmah Jehu-Appiah

SERMON: Fiery, with useful pastoral advice★★★

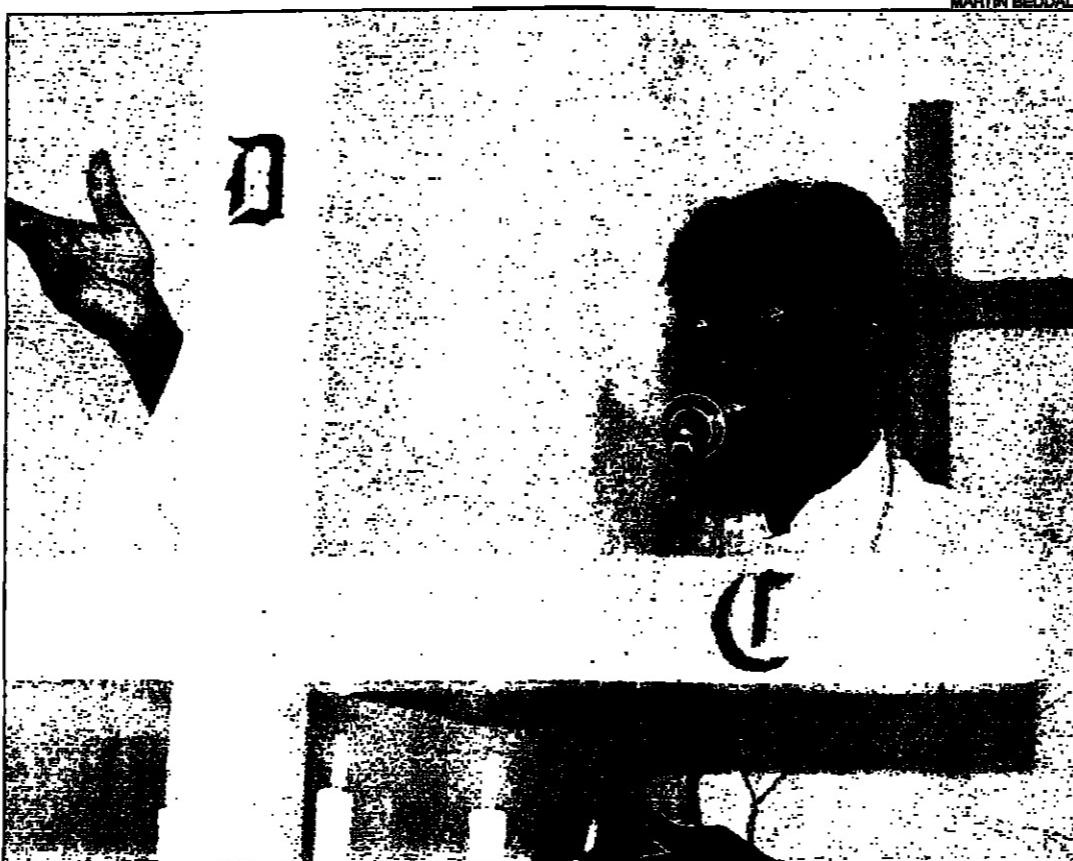
ARCHITECTURE: Grim, but better than most of the surrounding buildings★

MUSIC: Exotic and tuneful★★★

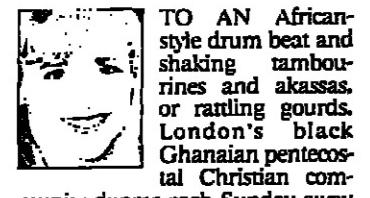
LITURGY: Unusual, but easy for a visitor to follow. Just say "amen" after every alleluia★★

AFTER SERVICE CARE: Tea and coffee after the service. Excellent counseling available ★★★

* stars are awarded up to a maximum of five



Hot-gospelling: Pastor Jeri Jehu-Appiah preaches with a verve West End performers might envy



TO AN African-style drum beat and shaking tambourines and akassas, or rattling gourds, London's black Ghanaian pentecostal Christian community dances each Sunday away in Brixton. Like so many small, inner-city churches, the Musama Disco Christo Church is a triumph of hope against adversity. The unremarkable red brick modern building, borrowed each week from its Methodist owners, stands like some strange missionary outpost amid dismal housing estates.

The church itself reverses the historical British view of white missionaries attempting to convert the dark continent to Christianity. Here we have a black African church offering Christian witness amid secular English atheism of the most despairing kind.

It is one of the thriving black-led pentecostal churches which are growing as fast as other churches decline. With their lively Christian witness in the bleak urban landscape, churches like this provide spiritual homes for the hundreds of black people who feel discriminated against in the predominantly white mainstream churches.

The word "discotheque" was in use in Britain as long ago as 1951, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which defines it as a club, etc., where recorded music is

played for dancing. But the use of the word "disco" by the Musama Disco Christo Church pre-dates this by 30 years. It was founded in Ghana in 1919 by Pastor Jeridan Jehu-Appiah's grandfather, Jemimah, and has grown into one of the largest indigenous West African pentecostal churches, with more than 100,000 members.

Pastor Jeri, as he is called, came to Britain in 1979 to minister to the immigrant pentecostal Ghanaian community. "It is called the Disco Church, but that has nothing to do with discos as we understand them today," he says. "The full name and its translation was given by charismatic inspiration to the founder."

Disco in this context means The Army of the Cross of Christ. The initials MCCC are engraved on the altar cross in the church. Nevertheless, it is a place where disco lovers can let their hair down in an atmosphere of dance, music and devout prayer. Like most pentecostals and charismatics, members of the Musama Disco Christo Church receive the "gifts of the spirit", or charisms, listed by St Paul in 1 Corinthians 12-14. These include the gifts of healing, prophecy, wisdom, faith, speaking in tongues and interpretation.

The liturgy at first seemed unstructured, interspersed with impromptu "alleluia, amen", but it emerged that the service followed a series of prayers Pastor Jeri had written. From the hymn book,

Songs of Inspiration, largely written by him, we sang African and modern gospel songs, augmented by spine-tingling African harmonies from the congregation.

The pastor's work has a growing following, and is occasionally performed publicly by children and the younger church members in his black choir, Voices of Inspiration.

Pastor Jeri works in his spare time as a chaplain and pastoral counsellor at the Maudsley Hospital in Denmark Hill, south London. He leads regular healing services, group meetings and Bible studies at his home, which attract many people from the wider community, plus members of the 120-strong church. His job-search group has temporarily put itself out of work by finding jobs for all its members. Ghanaians and Afro-Caribbeans travel to Brixton from throughout greater London for these groups and the two-and-a-half hour Sunday service, which seemed to pass in a few minutes when we were there. This was in spite of a sermon which lasted half an hour and announcements which extended it even further.

The pastor believes there is an art to preaching, and watching him was better than seeing some West End performers. Crescendos and diminuendos, shouting, pointing and dramatic gesticulations accompanied his Bible-based commentaries. He uses a microphone, but does not really need it. Sometimes

he brings in a drama group to act out the sermon for him, other times he will act it out himself. Unlike many preachers, he is not afraid to address the issue of the devil and the nature of evil. "One day," he says, "I was talking to a man who asked: 'Can I be a devil?' I said: 'No, you can't. Everyone has evil tendencies in them but I don't think that means you become a devil, because Satan is an entity in himself.' I said: 'Why do you ask?' He replied: 'Sometimes I feel so

angry that I find only evil going on in my head. That's when I feel that maybe I have turned into a devil.'

"Don't we sometimes feel so much anger in us, so much hatred in us, that all the good disappears?" Pastor Jeri asked. "This might not be caused by the Devil, but by life's circumstances: poverty, troubles and hardship. Difficulties will come, hardships will come. But in all this we need to remember, these troubles will not finish us."

To his left sat his wife, Cynthia, who leads the church prayer group, and to his right the church elder, a layman. All three wore vivid white cassocks, reflecting light on to the white lace headscarves of women in the congregation. Women have risen to be among the most senior evangelists in the organisation. None in England celebrates Holy Communion, but the church is not, in any case, particularly sacramental. The eucharist services are reserved for Christian festivals and holidays.

At the end of services, personal testimony and prayers are invited from the congregation. Anyone who believes pentecostal Christianity to be facile, or to offer easy answers, needs only hear the testimonies to have such prejudice confounded.

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1992 may have been a poor vintage for many people, but some enjoyed it. Julia Llewellyn Smith takes a head count



Lucky: (from left) Richard Young, Kate Moss, Jane March, Sir Alistair Grant,

Jason Orange, Linford Christie, Ganesh Sittampalam (above), June Osborne

Cheers . . .

In anybody's book, 1992 was a pretty awful year. The recession lingered on, unemployment rose, and the royal family was shaken to its foundations by the marriage break-ups of both the Duke and Duchess of York and the Prince and Princess of Wales. Yet, while the majority of us will not be sad to see the end of it, for some 1992 has been a year to remember: one they will look back on with satisfaction.

While 1992 may have been an *annus horribilis* for the Queen, for the Princess Diana Fan Club it was a bumper year. Its numbers rose from eight to 120, and members were unperturbed by the news that their idol had tried to kill herself with a lemon peeler and dallied with a man who called her "squidgy". Linda Dawson, who runs the club from her house in Poole, said: "The newspaper coverage generated an amazing amount of interest. I've had 80 phone calls in one week. Lots of people gave memberships as Christmas presents."

According to Mrs Dawson, 46, the princess's image has not suffered from the revelations in Andrew Morton's sensational book *Diana, Her True Story*. "Absolutely the reverse," she said. "I don't think people realised how unhappy she has been. Yet, in spite of all her problems she still goes out and cheers up the elderly and the sick, and they admire her even more." Mrs Dawson is loyal to the prince too: "There are always two sides to a coin, it can't be any nicer for him."

Richard Young, the so-called king of the paparazzi, also did very nicely out of the royal misery. "All the interest in the royals meant there was a great demand for photos from my archives. I only hope next year will be as interesting," he said. Most grown men might think there are better ways to earn a living than spending hours outside night clubs, often in the pouring rain, in the hope of gaining snatched shots of passing film stars and rock legends. But such shots have made Mr Young almost as well-known as his victims and 1992 was packed with photo opportunities. "I went with Michael Jackson when he visited an orphanage in Romania, and I got the only one-to-one photo session with Madonna when she was in London, and she was very amenable," Mr Young said.

Away from the glare of the paparazzi's flash guns, June Broomfield, an east-London deacon, had a wonderful year, as she heard the news she had been baptising for all her adult life: women could at last be ordained. "1992 was a year of historic change for the Church of England, and this was a tremendous step forward for

women like me who have a sense of God's calling," she said. Mrs Broomfield, a member of the standing committee of the General Synod and tipped to be the first woman bishop, added: "There has been a lot to celebrate personally; I have also had a second child."

There was good news for cleavers this year, as sales of the revived Wonderbra increased fivefold. Designed, in the words of its manufacturer, Gossard, to give "maximum oomph", more than a million women are now thought to own the garment which could give a cleavage to thin air. Rosemary Hawthorne, author of the historical studies *Knickers and Bras*, said: "Cries and social upheaval bring out fashions that show off the bosom, because when times are hard we need to feel that there is something soft to fall back on."

The Norwegian government sank £1 million into the production of the musical *Whitch Witch*, which folded after only ten weeks, having been described as "the musical from hell".

The Swedes, meanwhile, did rather better by infiltrating our homes with the sound of the Abba revival and with sofa beds called Poang and bookcases called Billy, from the furnishing giant Ikea. In 1992 Ikea took over Habitat, opened two new superstores in Croydon and Gateshead and saw visitor numbers rise by 60 per cent.

However, Ollie Holvander, the marketing director, refused to be

dazzled by his success: "It has been hard work, a very demanding year.

It takes a lot of strength," he said.

When pressed, he conceded, "I would like to name the year as a very good year for us."

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the better quality second-hand jewellery they see in our windows."

British tennis player Jeremy Bates failed to win Wimbledon, but sprinter Linford Christie made us feel there was still some hope for British sport when, at 32, he became the oldest man to win the 100 metres Olympic gold medal, for the 100 metres. "1992 has been my year and nobody can take that away from me," said Mr Christie.

Mr Christie's team-mate, Sally Gunnell, became the first British woman in 25 years to win a gold medal in a track event when she won the 400 metres hurdles. In October she married Jon Bigg in Florida. She looks back on 1992 with pride but is hoping to achieve still more. "Because I am Olympic champion, everyone is going to be out to beat me. There will be a lot of pressure, but I won the one that matters."

Meanwhile, Nigel Mansell, the world Formula One racing champion, beat them both to be voted Sports Personality of the Year by BBC viewers, despite being described by malicious commentators as having the character of a damp spark plug.

The family of Laura Davies, the four-year-old from Manchester who spent five months in Pittsburgh undergoing a life-saving liver and bowel transplant, enjoyed their best Christmas in years, with Laura well enough to eat her first turkey dinner. Her mother Frances, 27, who is expecting a third child early next year, said: "A year ago she was a skinny little thing with no life in her. Now look at her, it brings a lump to my throat. We are so proud of her."

A year ago Jason Orange, 22,

was a painter and decorator. Today his picture is pinned on the bedroom wall of almost every teenage girl in the land in his capacity as a member of the all-singing, all-dancing band from Manchester, Take That. In a year of 1970s nostalgia, Take That were not so much the new Sex Pistols as the Osmonds all over again. They do not smoke or drink, three of them still live at home with their mothers and their latest tour was sponsored by the Family Planning Association to promote safe sex. Nonetheless their fan club of 30,000 is the largest in the country, and 300,000 teenage readers of *Smash Hits* voted them "best band in the world". "This year has been a dream for us, and it's totally changed my life," said Mr Orange, described as the cheeky, sexy one of the group. "We have always wanted a hit album, a hit single and a hit tour and this year all those things came true for us."

... and tears

Other recession beaters were the big three supermarkets, Sainsbury, Safeway and Tesco, all of whom saw profits soar. Sir Alistair Grant, chairman of the Argos group, of which Safeway, which recorded a 15 per cent increase, is part, said: "It has been a good year, although what pleased me most was the improvement in the products our supermarkets sell. People won't believe this, but winning an award for our wine made me even happier than our financial performance."

Unemployment rose steadily all year, largely, it seems, because Philip Schofield had taken over all the jobs. Mr Schofield, 30, spent his Saturday mornings this year presenting the television show *Going Live*, and spent the evenings in an amazing technicolour dreamcoat in the starring role of the musical *Joseph*, which he took over from his Jason Donovan, despite having hardly ever sung a note before. He has a dark work, a very demanding year. It takes a lot of strength," he said. When pressed, he conceded, "I would like to name the year as a very good year for us."

and had had a biography published called *Philip Schofield, The Whole Amazing Story*. If this was not enough, he also announced he would marry his girlfriend, Stephanie Lowe, next summer. "I'm surprised my career ever got to this level. I only ever thought about being a jobbing presenter. I never had any grand ideas," the modest Mr Schofield said.

The history books may name

1992 as Labour's worst year,

following the resounding Conser-

vative victory in the general election in April, but the party's 69 new MPs still had a good year, using their increased numbers to make life as difficult as possible for the government.

Annus mirabilis

Gordon and Bridget Prentice, members of Pendle and Lewisham East, both distrobed Conserva-

tives to become the first Labour

husband and wife team to enter the

House of Commons. "It's been a

vintage year," Mr Prentice said.

"*Annus mirabilis* for us, *annus*

horribilis for everyone else."

Miscarriages of justice came to

light on an almost weekly basis, but the British system found one satis-

fied customer in Julie-Anne

Armitage, who took her hairdresser

to court after he left her with a

haircut which, in her words, "made

me look like a cross between a

squaddie and a hedgehog". "At

least it shows the British legal

system can work," she said, after

winning £25 damages plus com-

pensation from her local hairdresser in Chippenham, Wiltshire. "I am Mrs Joe Public and I had to

show that people like me can go to

court and say we are not satisfied

with this. The British are no good

at complaining."

Mr Armitage's hair has now

grown back. "Christmas 1992 has

been an improvement on 1991,"

she said. "Last year I couldn't bear

going out of the house. You can be

dressed up to the nines, but if your

hair's not right you feel lousy." She

has a new hairdresser now, who is

"very, very careful not to cut too

much off".

While 1992 saw a record 86

British businesses a day go bust,

some, happily, managed to profit

from the recession. Simon Brown,

of the York-based chain of pawn-

broke Herbert Brown & Son, re-

ported a very successful year.

"People have become wary of

buying cheap jewellery, preferring

the better quality second-hand

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British tennis player Jeremy

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Lady of the camellias

Francesca
Greenoak says
don't kill with
kindness



Winner: camellia williamsii

Camellias are among the most perfect of blooms, but easily spoilt by a touch of frost or a chilling wind. They have acquired romantic and tragic identification with doomed beauty Alexandre Dumas, Garbo, the beautiful portrait of Ellen Terry by Watts, where the red of the petals merges with the red of her mouth, the gold stamens with the amber of her necklace.

In fact, people have always overestimated the fragility of camellias, from the 19th century, when they were suffocated in stove-heated camelia houses, to the present day, when it is a fair bet that many of the camellia plants sitting in garden centres will suffer quite badly in centrally heated houses. If you have received a camellia for Christmas, be kind and plant it outdoors as soon as you can. If you want to observe the exquisite flowers at close quarters, let it flower in a cool porch or greenhouse or an unheated room before planting out.

Jenny Trehane, the proprietor of Trehane Camellias and a moving force within the International Camellia Society, has extensive knowledge of the best hybrids produced worldwide. She is also responsible for the forthcoming Times camellia event at the News International Garden Fair at Wembley next Easter, which will be the most comprehensive display of camellias ever staged.

She has robust views on camellia growing: "They are long-lived and very easy plants," provided you observe a few basic rules. Remember that camellias grow naturally in cool, humid forests, and it is clear that in gardens they must have a



Leading light: Jenny Trehane says that camellias are easy, provided a few basic rules are observed

sheltered, partially shaded, moist position. The main spoiling factors are sun, frost and cold wind, which burn the leaves. Camellias are not tolerant of chalk or lime soils, but in my Chiltern garden, which is clay over chalk, Trehane recommends - Elegant Beauty - has given me reliable, deep pink spring blooms in my north border for seven years. Being late-flowering, Elegant Beauty tends to miss our hilltop frosts. It has bronze young growth which is very pretty, and is vigorous and floppy, so it can be easily trained on a wall.

Donation and Anticipation, well-

known pink *williamsii* camellias, available from garden centres in my area, won Miss Trehane's approval, but she gave the older *japonica* cultivars *A. nemoniflora* and *Optima* "thumbs down, except for conservatory use". As a rule, *japonica* plants have larger, glossier leaves than the *williamsii*, and although they will live through lower temperatures, they will lose their leaves more readily.

Camellias from the nursery or garden centre come fitted out with large, fat buds but, says Miss Trehane, "it is next year's buds you

want to be concerned about". The rules are simple but vital: feed from April to August only with the same sort of fertiliser you would give azaleas or rhododendrons; give the tender frost protection with a winter mulch - leaf mould is ideal. The buds of winter-flowering camellias are formed from July to September, and the plant must not suffer from drought during this period.

● A catalogue/handbook containing 200 cultivars is £1.50 (inc p&p) from Trehane Camellia Nursery, Stape Hill Road, Hampton, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7NE (0202 873490).

BEST BUYS

SHALLOTS have a good flavour, keep longer than large onions and are easy to grow. They can be planted now in mild regions, or in raised beds where the soil is easily worked and well-drained. Atlantic is a good, yellow-brown skinned shallot. Pilgrim produces high yields of red-brown bulbs (recommended for early planting). Order from seed companies, or buy them in garden centres over the next few weeks. Creation, the first shallot from seed, is available only from Unwins (0945 588522); the large, long-lasting Santa from Dobies (0803 616888) must not be planted out until after mid-April.



Keep cool: pink cyclamen

- Pick flowering stems of winter jasmine, witch hazel, viburnums and berried stems of holly and skimmia to use in festive arrangements.
- Do not overwater plants in cool greenhouses or frames.
- Regularly check recently planted trees and shrubs, firm the soil at the base and inspect stakes and ties.
- Protect broccoli and cauliflower hearts by bending the nearest leaves over them.
- Try to give newly bought cyclamen a cool, humid spot, even if only during the night hours.

WEEKEND TIPS

Rocking and rolling towards middle age

Charles Jennings will never get to strut his stuff on stage at Hammersmith now that he is past 30 and over the hill

Growing up is hard to do: puberty, majority and 30 are the big steps we must take before we enter the kingdom of adulthood - and of all these, turning 30 is the hard one.

I finally realised this when someone turned to me at my thirtieth birthday celebration and said: "Of course, you do know that you're now too old to take up heavy metal guitar as a career option?" With a spasm of nostalgia that almost caused me to sob into my pressed duck, I knew that I had finally left my youth behind.

You see, like so many of my generation, I had been existing on a diet of fantastic possibilities since my early teen age - imagining myself in one of those roles that are only possible provided your age begins with a figure one or two, and which become abruptly ludicrous and pathetic the moment you turn 30. As long as I was still on the side of the young ones, I could kid myself along with the idea of becoming a poet, professional model, tennis-player, precociously brilliant philosopher, screen ingenue, juvenile concert player or, of course, heavy metal guitarist, without actually having to exert myself and become any of those things.

But 30 is a watershed. At that point, the fantasies of youth must cease. Every day, as I prowl my grey hairs in the bathroom mirror and tuck my burgeoning paunch into the waistband of my trousers (curious fact: after 30, your age in years is the same as your waist measurement in inches), I tell myself that you cannot be in one until your fifties, and probably sixties, but you cannot start one.

That is the first by-product of the thirtieth birthday. And of course, once I understood that the curtain had finally come down on my young self and that I was never, never going to strut my funky business across the stage of the Hammersmith Odeon, all the other realities of what Martin Amis once called "the unqualified nightmare of early middle-age" suddenly came into clear, appalling focus.

And what are these realities? They are children, money and health: the thirties triumvirate, the

things which you skilfully dodged, forgot about or simply ignored all through your teens and twenties. In fact, turning 30 involves not just entering a new phase of life, but a phase whose constituent parts are completely unlike anything you have previously experienced.

Take children, for instance. Careers and courtship mean that many women now wait until the big three-o before choosing to start a family. Thirties, for the middle-classes, mean children. Which means that on turning 30, you are

which has now vanished like the drink in an alcoholic's glass.

If you have a partner but do not start a family, children are still unavoidable, as you watch your 30-year-old friends and acquaintances burdening themselves with children and dearly insisting that you should get on and join them while there's still time. And if you tough it out and refuse to settle with a partner of any kind, then the question - unmasked in the twenties, but overwhelmingly vital in the thirties - has to be why? Is there something the matter with you?

But the catchier in this litany of changes is the dawning perception that whatever state you live in, your body is slowly falling apart. The newly-turned 30-year-old will begin to discover cross-hatching around the eyes, joints that have given out, bowels that have turned muddled, veins that itch, strange ominous harbinger of mortality.

Even when there is nothing particularly wrong with one's body, it simply starts to behave in an alien and disturbing way. I quite often catch myself attempting to straighten up from, say, a low crouch, one hand in the small of my back, the other reaching for a piece of furniture to give me support, like an old person. And yet I am only in early middle-age.

It is uncanny how all these things - children, money and health - leap out at you like bandits, the moment you reach your thirties. I imagine there must be a way to spread the burden less hedonism in one's twenties, more financial prudence in one's thirties, that kind of thing - without excessive self-delusion: but the fact is, it's too late for me to try.

To be honest, the thing which keeps me going these days, is my insane desire to be a rock 'n' roller: only now it has subsided into a mere hobby, a house with several floors, school fee schemes, a man with a calculator who comes round every six months claiming to be my personal financial adviser... and I have no idea how I got these things, or how I am going to pay for them now I have them.

The moment you give in to the demands of biology and admit that you cannot defer children any longer, you are buried in requests for money - money which you recall having in your twenties, but

faced with nothing less than a personal revolution after decades of carefree selfishness. Was I spiritually ready, on the arrival of my first child (shortly after my thirtieth birthday), for the giving, the sharing, the 4am distress calls and the relentless persistence of children after a long lifetime spent pleasing myself? No, I was not.

This then combined in a pincer movement with all my money anxieties. Only the most prudent put enough by in their twenties to make a dent in the bills which parenthood, or the prospect of parenthood, brings. All through my twenties, my middle name was Spendthrift - and yet I now boast a pension plan, a house with several floors, school fee schemes, a man with a calculator who comes round every six months claiming to be my personal financial adviser... and I have no idea how I got these things, or how I am going to pay for them now I have them.

The moment you give in to the demands of biology and admit that you cannot defer children any longer, you are buried in requests for money - money which you recall having in your twenties, but

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Estate agents are taking a new angle on property photographs, Rachel Kelly reports. Now it's overhead shots and video films

Sellers rise to new heights to lure viewers

Open a page of *Country Life* at random this winter and you are assailed by photographs of country houses up for sale, most of them surrounded by verdant green, roses in full bloom and wisteria in flower. One does not have to be a gardener to smell a rat-like estate agent at work presenting a house to its best advantage.

But who can blame them? The agents' interests and those of their clients lie in successful sales. By common consent, houses photographed in summer or early spring provide the most flattering sales photographs and the best chance of deals: the more chocolate-box the picture, the better.

In the present slow-selling market though, even a glamorous summery photograph putting the house's best facade forward may not be enough. So agents are developing new tricks of the presentation trade, and increasingly one of their favourites is the overhead photo.

Once the preserve of owners of stately homes, who snapped their bijou residences while on an occasional helicopter ride, such aerial shots are now more likely to have been commissioned by the sellers of suburban semi-detached houses — a key selling point necessarily lost in a standard photograph.

Time will show if the £300 fee for the aerial shot succeeds in selling the house, and pays for itself; a new ad has not yet been placed in the local papers. But the evidence from other homeowners seems to suggest that at the very least aerial shots can entice potential buyers to come and have a closer look at a house, which is essential in a market where viewings, let alone sales, are elusive.

Gavin Fleming, a director of Winkworth, the agents, suggested that an aerial shot might ginger up some interest.

David M. Kay's company, Ali-Cam, specialises in providing such overhead photos for estate agents. The company's photographic



Sales point: David Kay sets up an overhead shot on a mobile hoist

equipment is set on top of an adjustable 100ft. trailer-borne mast, with which heights and angles can be changed to provide the best shot.

"When you have piles and piles of property particulars coming through your door, and hundreds of suburban houses all looking exactly the same, you need something different to stand out from the crowd," Mr Kay says. "With an overhead shot, you can see the layout of the street, the access, the neighbours, and what's behind the house."

Only a dozen or so homeowners have so far adopted thewarts-and-all overhead approach, says Mr Kay, who started his service last autumn, so proof of its efficacy remains elusive. But the list of agents hoping to offer such services is growing, with Hamptons the latest to sign up.

There is evidence, too, that such



Rear view: the high camera shot of this house at Kingston upon Thames shows its proximity to the river

photography works when selling commercial sites, such as warehouses and factories. It also works for residential property overseas, where the practice is well-established, Mr Kay says.

Developers selling marina prop-

erty have long realised the benefits of allowing prospective purchasers to see the entrance to the basin and the mooring for their boat.

Clearly, the approach is not right for all houses. Those with pleasant surroundings and gardens or a golf

course next door could benefit. So could those with land for sale, or land with planning consent.

Those with less salubrious surroundings could lose out. "An overhead shot would be unsuitable for someone who lived in a house

which, for example, had a horrendous eye-sore next door," Mr Kay says. Nor would most flats benefit, though an overhead view of an apartment block could help show its situation.

Rupert Sweeting, of Knight Frank & Rutley's country house department, says his company tends not to use overhead shots.

"Often all you get is a picture of roofs, which can be unattractive," he says. "But if you can photograph at an appropriate angle, then it can be great."

The grander country estate agents tend to have less use for such photographs, as their subject matter — often distinguished, and easily distinguishable, country estates — need little help to stand out from the crowd. Unlike agents selling cheaper properties, who are likely to snap the house themselves and wouldn't know a Cartier-Bresson from a David Bailey, the likes of Knight Frank & Rutley employ professionals who may drive for miles to achieve the most appealing shot, say from across the valley.

Knights Frank has developed a more sophisticated marketing approach, and prepared a catalogue which organises properties into three bands, according to their distance from London — 50 miles, 50-100 miles and 100 miles plus.

Other agents are toying with the idea of making video presentations, long used by realtors in America, where distances often make viewing in person impossible. Property Profile, a newly launched company, aims to net a wider catch of buyers with the help of videos. Christina Symons, its founder, says: "With fewer prospective purchasers spread over much greater distances at home, in Europe and even further afield, the potential market has never been fully exploited."

The firm uses broadcast-quality video, rather than the camcorder variety. "Vendors' homes are displayed at their best, with a realism printed materials can never match," she says. "Videos eliminate the constraints of distance, viewing times and even weather."

The only problem, Mr Sweeting adds, is that potential buyers may enjoy looking at the video and not bother to get on a plane to see the actual house. Maybe a summery photo in *Country Life* makes the best sense after all.

High spirit levels

JULIAN HERBERT



In the footsteps of Raleigh: Deborah and David Chapman at the Downton manor house they restored

Home from home:

David and Deborah Chapman in Wiltshire

house has long been divided into a bedroom above and a study below, where Mr Chapman displays his dressage mementoes and paintings of the horses he rides. The beamed master bedroom has been stripped back to the soaring, cathedral-like ceiling of the original. Bathrooms have been concealed in spaces close to the four bedrooms.

Mr Chapman swears that when he was in his dressing-room one day, he saw Raleigh flitting through, gone in an instant. Mrs Chapman's daughter, 22-year-old Clarissa Leigh-Wood, will not enter the guest room, because she says it is haunted by "a woman in white".

After Raleigh, the manor was again rented out by its original owner, Winchester College, mostly to farmers. In 1952 it was sold to the local MP, the late Sir Roger Perkins, who lived there until he died. It remained empty, except for a housekeeper, for about a year until someone came along with sufficient determination to take on the costly job of renovation.

Mr Chapman, an international investment adviser to Arab interests in the Gulf, has recently shifted his ventures into reconstruction projects in Cambodia. With his partner, Thierry de Roland Peel, he has started a 37,000-acre banana plantation there, which often keeps him away from Wiltshire and the family's other home, flat in Eaton Square, London.

Reconstructing the manor was a considerable challenge, and lasted a year. "We didn't expect it would take so long," Mr Chapman says, looking around the house with satisfaction. Mrs Chapman says: "I didn't want to undertake it at first, and we came back to it only after searching for six months and viewing about 40 other properties. Still, it's done now and we can enjoy it."

JOY BILLINGTON



1 Set in a rich agricultural area, famous for its foie gras and fiery Armagnac brandy, this rural stone farmhouse ripe for renovation is in almost 16 acres of meadow and woodland and is priced at FF1300,000 (about £36,145). The birthplace of D'Artagnan, immortalised by Alexandre Dumas in *The Three Musketeers*, this historic French département, part of an ancient province, is also noted for its fortified bastide towns, built by the English more than 600 years ago.



2 Near a town of medieval appearance, in a bend of a beautiful river in an area producing full-blooded red wines, this stone farmhouse, with a square pigeon tower and porticoed balcony, is for sale at FF114 million (about £172,300). The 200-year-old house, in eight acres, has been restored, but needs redecoration. It has two large reception rooms with beamed ceilings and stone fireplaces, and four bedrooms. There is further accommodation on three floors in a dovecot tower.



3 This former presbytery, in a sleepy village perched high on a rocky escarpment, within sight of the lower Alps and close to the olive oil capital of France, is for sale at FF350,000 (about £42,170). Built in pale, sun-baked stone, the property has a new roof but needs modernisation. It has vaulted ceilings beneath the raised ground floor, which comprises kitchen/living room, with open fireplace, shower and lavatory. There are two bedrooms above. A bell tower is attached. No garden.

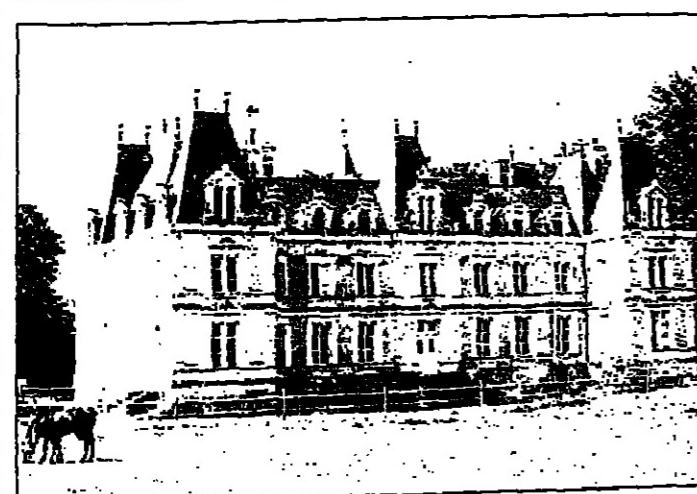
Buyer's France COMPETITION

tion, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN, by Jan 6, 1993. Answers to the quiz, and a list of agents, will be published later.

Employees and families of Times Newspapers Ltd and French property agents are excluded from entering this competition. Times competition rules apply.

Entries should be sent to *The Times* Buyer's France Competition.

CHERYL TAYLOR



5 Once the stamping ground of the French landed gentry, chateaux are plentiful in this part of France, in varying degrees of dilapidation. You can buy this magnificent 19th-century chateau, complete with six turrets and a moat, set in 37 acres of parkland with meadows and woods, for FF2.7 million (about £323,000). It has 12 main rooms, with parquet floors and period fireplaces, and has most of the modern conveniences, but no central heating. The nearest town gives its name to Anjou wine. Other nearby towns include one famous for its cavalry school, and another for its fine lace handkerchiefs.



6 Located in an area of France well known for its cider and apple brandy, and near a town named after its famous cow's milk cheese, this historic country estate, dating from the 14th century, with traditional colombages (half-timbered) manor house, is for sale at FF12.2 million (about £265,000). The 600-year-old house has been carefully restored, retaining many of the original features. It also has central heating and an alarm system. The price includes 40 acres of pasture and apple orchards, an old, unconverted pressoir (cider house) and barn. There is also a stable in the grounds and a habitable caretaker's cottage.

Apparition: Sir Walter Raleigh

roof, but I looked at it carefully when we were putting in the steel beams needed to strengthen the roof, and I think that bit is fantasy."

David and Deborah Chapman bought the house two years ago for £477,000. Since then, there has been an extensive structural renovation costing £250,000 and involving 13 different tradesmen. An adjacent cottage also needed work.

The Great Room is well named.

The paneling gleams, and a

painting of a woman in white satin

hangs on one wall, in front of a

layer of paneling that for years

concealed a portrait of Raleigh —

probably hidden by his family after

his execution in 1618. The paint-

ing was discovered in 1857 and

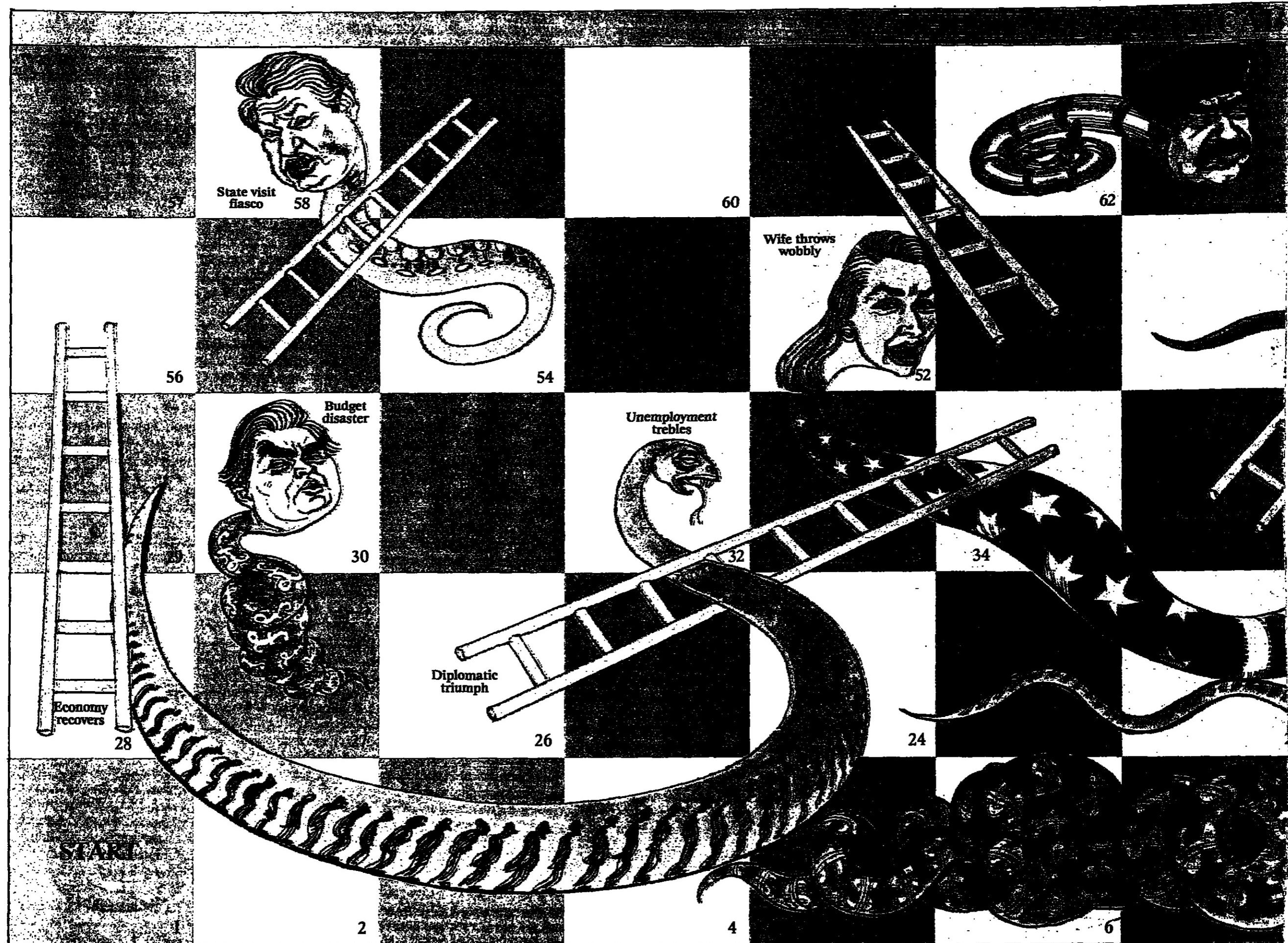
sold to form the nucleus of what

would become the National Por-

trait Gallery's collection.

The chapel of Raleigh's new

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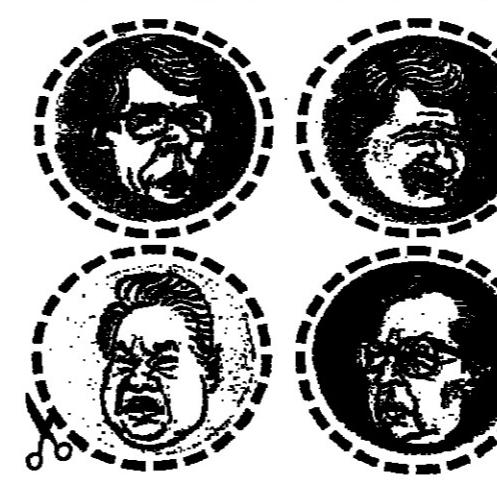
● THE GAME can be played by two to four players, although it is best with four. Ideally, a fifth person should act as quizmaster, but this is not essential. Players represent four political leaders: John Major, Bill Clinton, Boris Yeltsin and Jacques Delors. The youngest player should be John Major, the second youngest Bill Clinton, the third Boris Yeltsin, and the oldest Jacques Delors. You may cut out the caricatures of the four political figures below to act as markers or use any small object instead.

● PLAYERS take turns to answer questions in their character's list in ascending order of age. Questions can be answered in any order the player chooses. Score off each question as it is correctly answered. A correct answer will allow the player to move his or her marker the same number of spaces as the question's number (for example, question 7 allows the marker to move seven spaces forward). Players are allowed only one attempt to answer a question per turn. If they give an incorrect answer, their counter stays where it is until the next turn, when the same question must be attempted again. If the answer is still wrong, the same question must be tackled on successive turns until it is answered correctly.

● IF A COUNTER lands at the foot of a ladder, it climbs to the top of that ladder. Similarly, a counter that lands on the head of a snake slides down to the end of the snake's tail. Note that one snake has two heads; counters landing on either square 46 or 47 must go back to square 44.

● WHEN approaching the end of the game, square 70 - Re-election, players can only finish without answering all the questions in their list if their counter lands on square 70 itself after moving the full number of spaces won by answering the most recent question correctly. If the player overshoots square 70, he or she must count the additional moves backwards on the board - for example, a player answering question 4 correctly while his or her counter is on square 67 must move three spaces forward and then one back (total four) and will land on square 69, unless the question is the last remaining unanswered on his or her list. If the question is the last one on the player's list, the player is deemed to have finished if the correct answer carries the counter up to or beyond square 70. The first player to reach square 70, or to pass it having answered all the questions correctly, is the winner.

● IF A PLAYER has answered all the questions in his or her list correctly without reaching square 70, the player is allowed to continue playing by answering any hitherto unanswered questions remaining on the list of the player whose turn preceded his or her own (for example, if John Major is still on square 65 after answering all the Major questions correctly, the player may attempt any unanswered questions remaining on Jacques Delors' list). If all the questions have been answered correctly but still no player has reached square 70, the winner is the player whose counter is on the highest numbered square.



1. In which country was Christmas pudding taken off the prescription list of medicines this year?
 a) France
 b) Russia
 c) United Kingdom
 d) United States
2. John Major's father was
 a) a garden gnome
 b) a music-hall artiste
 c) Mayor of Woking
 d) a bank manager
3. For which bank did John Major work?
 a) Bank of Commerce and Credit International
 b) Bank of England
 c) Banque Paribas
 d) Standard Chartered Bank
4. Where was John Major a councillor?
 a) Wandsworth
 b) Huntingdon
 c) Lambeth
 d) Westminster
5. How many A-level passes did John Major get from school?
 a) None
 b) Two
 c) Three
 d) An as yet undisclosed number
6. What was John Major's last job before becoming prime minister?
 a) Chancellor of the Exchequer
 b) Financial Secretary to the Treasury
 c) Foreign Secretary
 d) Leader of the House
7. John Major's brother Terry is
 a) redundant since 1989
 b) a company director
 c) a train driver
 d) a car-park attendant
8. How old is John Major according to *Private Eye's Secret Diary* of John Major?
 a) 11½
 b) thirtysomething
 c) 30½ (just over the limit)
 d) 47½
9. What was John Major's wife's book about?
 a) sailing
 b) fashion
 c) opera
 d) politics
10. Which is said to be John Major's preferred food?
 a) bananas
 b) parsnips
 c) scrambled eggs
 d) hummus
11. Which was not among John Major's books listed in *Diary*?
 a) *The Best Is Yet To Come*
 b) *Rhapsody in Blue*
 c) *Elgar's Cockaigne Overture*
 d) *Madame from Lucia di Lammermoor*
12. Which did John Major choose as his desert island luxury?
 a) The Oval cricket ground
 b) John Arden's commentary on Bradman's last innings
 c) a Rubik cube
 d) Chelsea's Stamford Bridge football ground
13. Where was John Major's childhood spent?
 a) Hyde Park
 b) Gorky Park
 c) Moor Park
 d) Worcester Park
14. Who accompanied Mr and Mrs Clinton when they went on their honeymoon?
 a) Mr Clinton's mother
 b) Mr Clinton's brother
 c) Mr and Mrs Al Gore
 d) Mrs Clinton's brothers
15. Which musical instrument does Bill Clinton play?
 a) saxophone
 b) trumpet
 c) drums
 d) vibes
16. Who has Bill Clinton appointed as his White House staff?
 a) MacSharry
 b) Ronald McDonald
 c) Trevor Macdonald
 d) Thomas McLarty

Nicole Swengley has pounded the pavements of our cities and towns in search of the best buys to be had in the sales.

Bargain hunters start here

LONDON STORES

Arding & Hobbs, Clapham Junction, SW11 (071-228 8877)
Dec 28-Jan 30: Up to 50 per cent off linens, cookware, carpets, curtains and beds, plus reductions in all fashion departments.

Army & Navy, Victoria Street, SW1 (071-634 1234)
Dec 28-Jan 30: Selected co-ordinates by Betty Barclay, ARA and Jeff Banks reduced by 50 per cent. One third off branded collections by Galpene, Mexx, Wild Bunch and SSC. Weekend savings of casual co-ordinates half price. Men's Pringle of Scotland sweaters reduced from £69.99 to £19.99. Generous reductions on lighting, furniture, carpets and cookware.

Barkers, Kensington High Street, W8 (071-937 5421)
Dec 28-Jan 30: Reductions in electricals, cookware, lighting, furniture, Chinese carpets and rugs. Fashion and menswear as for Army & Navy.

Debenhams, Oxford Street, W1 (071-580 3000)
Dec 28-Jan 30: Jan (open Dec 26 and 27 in Scotland). Big "Early Bird" discounts on first day of sale, 8.30-10am. Large discounts on selected items in all departments.

Dickens & Jones, Regent Street, W1 (071-734 7070)
Dec 28-end Jan: Reductions include linens, cookware, upholstery, beds and soft furnishings, with many items at half price. Fashions for men and women as for Army & Navy.

D.H. Evans, Oxford Street, W1 (071-629 8500)
Dec 28-Jan 30: Reductions on electricals, TV/audio equipment, carpets and furniture. Fashions for men and women as for Army & Navy.

Fenwick, New Bond Street, W1 (071-629 9161)
Dec 28-Jan 25 (closed Jan 1): Up to 30 per cent off designer collections. Including Nicole Farhi, Paul Costelloe, Betty Jackson, Marella, Mondi, Betty Barclay.

Fortnum & Mason, 181 Piccadilly, W1 (071-730 8040)
Jan 6 onwards: Large reductions on designer fashions. Preview for account customers Jan 5.

Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1 (071-730 1234)

Jan 6-30: Substantial reductions in every department. Toshiba 34in Nicam/Telex 3409 TV reduced from £1,499 to £999. Miele W701 hydromatic washing-machine from £895 to £795. Derwent Baslow three-piece suite from £1,950 to £1,195. For first four days of sale shoppers spending £200 or more in a single transaction can enter draw for a Jaguar XJS convertible.

Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London SW1 (071-235 5000)
Dec 29-end Jan: Between 25 and 50 per cent off selected designer-label fashion and good reductions on china. Extra 10 per cent off on first four days of sale, including new accounts opened.

John Lewis, Oxford Street, W1 (071-629 7711) and Brent Cross Shopping Centre (081-202 6535)

Dec 30-Jan 9 (closed Jan 1): Wide selection of Jonelle bedding, plain and patterned quilt covers. Reductions on 13 styles of beds, including Reyon. Special purchase single divan set £199, and padded headboards from £29.50. Special purchase Philips Nicam/TV with remote control and Telexset, £699.

Liberty, Regent Street, W1 (071-734 1234)

Dec 28-end Jan: Joseph Tricot chenille jumper reduced from £205 to £136. Liberty tana lawn shirts from £45 to £32.50 and tana lawn waistcoats from £49 to £29. Imperfect Liberty silk scarves, £39. Children's hand-smocked Liberty print dresses from £1.29 to £64.50. Imperfect Liberty furnishing prints 100 per cent cotton, 137cm wide £7.95 per metre.

Peter Jones, Sloane Square, SW1 (071-730 3434)
Dec 30-Jan 9 (closed Jan 1): Half price Edinburgh crystal "seconds": 35 per cent off Stuart Crystal "seconds" and 40 per cent off Kinver "seconds". Bed and table linens, furniture, radios and TVs reduced.

Selfridges, Oxford Street, W1 (071-629 1234)

Dec 28 onwards (open Jan 1, 10am-6pm): One third off selected womenswear, including Jasper Conran, Caroline Charles, Cerruti and Yves St Laurent Variation. Paul Costelloe items reduced by half. One third off men's selected items, including Louis Feraud, Moschino, Kenzo, Valentino and



Cerruti. Entire ranges of children's Levi's clothing and unisex knitwear reduced to clear. Half-price Butler & Wilson, Adrien Mann and Sarah Booth jewellery. Good reductions on china, glass, linens, silverware and furniture. Selfridges' fashion consultant Rosalind Alder, offers free guidance around the bargains (phone for appointment on ext. 3197).

OUT OF TOWN STORES

Alders, Basildon (0208 527858), Bromley (081-164 6533), Camberley (0276 692122), Chatham (0364 407377), Croydon (081-681 2577), Hull (0482 243531), Portsmouth (0705 521221), Sutton (081-642 6000) and Eltham (household department only) 081-850 9911.

Dec 28-Jan 30: Up to 50 per cent off linens, cookware, carpets, curtains and beds, plus reductions in all fashion departments: for example, Jacques Vert ladies' jackets from £99 to £85.99, Philips 21in Fastest TV reduced from £399.99 to £209.99; Whirlpool dishwasher from £379.99 to £299.99.

Barrett, Victoria Street, Wolverhampton (0902 223111) and branches at Birkenhead (0283 515515), Dudley (0384 459922), Northampton (0604 21111), Solihull (021-705 81111), Sutton Coldfield (021-355 6123), Worcester (0905 723456).

Dec 29-end Feb (open Jan 1, 10am-5pm): Half-price reductions on selected items and 25 per cent off in all departments, including women's and men's fashions, childrenswear, toys, kitchenware, china, glass, linens, electricals, TV and equipment.

Bentalls, Wood Street, Kingston-upon-Thames (081-546 1011), Lakeside, Thurrock (0708 860077), Ealing (081-567 3040), Luton (081-567 2311), Bracknell (0344 424678), Tonbridge (0732 771177) and Tunbridge Wells (0892 525223).

Dec 31-Jan 30 (Dec 28-Jan 30 at Lakeside): Reductions in all departments: half off all marked sale prices on Blue Cross Day, Jan 30.

Denners, High Street, Yeovil (0935 74444) and Half Moon Street, Sherborne (0935 812168)

Dec 28-Jan 23 (Yeovil), Dec 29-Jan 23 (Sherborne): Substantial discounts in all departments, including half-price reductions on Liz Claiborne, Jacques Vert, Alexon, Windsmoor.

Houses of Fraser, including Bath (0225 462811), Cardiff — Howells, St Mary's Street (0223 2105), Cheltenham — Cavendish House, The Promenade (0242 521300), Darlington — Binns, High Row (0325 462066), Edinburgh — Frasers, Princes Street (031-225 2472), Exeter — Dingles, High Street (0392 5924 2000), Glasgow — Buchanan Street (041-321 3880), Hull — Hammonds, Parson Square (0482 269511), Manchester — Kendals, Deansgate (061-832 3414).

Dec 28-Jan 30 (closed Jan 1 in Scotland): See Army & Navy, London, for details.

Jenners, 48 Princes Street, Edinburgh (031-225 2442)

Dec 29-Jan 30 (closed Jan 1): Assorted fashion designer knitwear, selected Lapidus trousers and Trocadero suits reduced by 50 per cent. One third off Arthur Price cutlery canteens.

John Lewis, including Aberdeen, Bristol, Edinburgh, High Wycombe, Kingston, Milton Keynes, Peterborough and Welshpool, Also at Bainbridge, Newcastle upon Tyne: Bonds, Norwich: Calver, Windsor, Cole Brothers, Sheffield: Heelas, Reading: Jessops, Nottingham: Knight & Lee, Liverpool: Robert Styler, Cambridge: Trewin, Watford, and Tyrell & Green, Southampton.

Dec 30-Jan 9 (closed Jan 1 in England, Jan 1-2 in Scotland): Special purchase Peter Reed 100 per cent Egyptian cotton bedlinen.

THE ADVERTISING ARCHIVES

Dec 29 onwards: Reductions of up to 50 per cent off many items.

Egypt, 6 Sloane Street, London, SW1 (071-245 9139), and Whiteleys, Queensway, W2 (071-229 7436)

Dec 28 for one month (open Jan 11am-4pm): Up to 60 per cent reductions on all sale stock.

Et Vous, 126 King's Road, London, SW3 (071-582 8948)

Dec 17-Jan 14: Discounts from 30 per cent.

Nicole Farhi, 1 Carnaby Street, London W1 (071-287 12 Floral Street, WC2 (071-497 8713); 27 Hampstead High Street, NW3 (011-458 0866); 193 Sloane Street, SW1 (071-255 0877); 25 St Christopher's Place, W1 (071-486 3416).

Dec 18-end Jan: Up to one third off all stock.

Gieves & Hawkes, 1 Savile Row, London, W1 (071-342 2001), 18 Little Street, EC3 (071-263 4914) and 64 Cannon Street, EC4 (071-329 0473).

Dec 29 onwards (Savile Row open Dec 28 and Jan 1, 10am-5pm): Pure wool business suits reduced from £325 to £225, classic wool blazer from £295 to £195, silk ties from £45 to £20 (three or more, £17 each), wide range of shirts from £59 to £35 and hand-tied shoes from £150 to £80.

Margaret Howell, Beauchamp Place, London, SW3 (071-584 2463) and 24 Brook Street, W1 (071-495 4889).

Jan 2 for about three weeks: Discounts from 30 per cent.

Betty Jackson, 311 Brompton Road, London SW3 (071-589 7884)

Dec 29 onwards: Up to 50 per cent off all winter stock.

Jaeger, 200-206 Regent Street, London W1 (071-734 8211) and branches

Dec 28 onwards: Black and white three-quarter coat reduced from £259 to £149, wool gabardine blazer from £249 to £149, with trousers to match from £119 to £89 and skirt to match from £105 to £59, classic silk shirt from £105 to £69, classic knitwear from £99 to £69, printed overshirt from £89 to £49. Good reductions on belts, handbags and scarves.

Karl Lagerfeld, 173 Bond Street, London W1 (071-493 6277)

Sale now on: Up to 40 per cent reductions.

Knickerbox — branches nationwide

Dec 26 onwards: Reductions on lingerie, boxer shorts and nightwear.

MaxMara, 153 New Bond Street, London W1 (071-491 4748) and 32 Sloane Street, SW1 (071-235 7944)

Jan 2 for about three weeks: 30 to 40 per cent discount on selected womenswear and accessories.

Next, 54-60 Kensington High Street, London W8 (071-938 4211) and branches nationwide

Dec 28 for about two weeks: Dec 26 in Scotland (closed Jan 1); Dec 29 at City branches in London: Women's chocolate double-breasted jacket reduced from £89.99 to £44.99, matching classic trousers from £66.99 to £23.49. Ivory silk shirts from £59.99 to £29.99, lilac cardigan from £29.99 to £14.99, matching short-sleeved sweater from £24.99 to £12.49. Mist piped detail dress from £15.99 to £7.49.

Principles — branches nationwide

Dec 26 onwards: Between 20 and 50 per cent discounts.

Ouiet, 35 Brompton Road, London SW3 (071-582 5439)

Dec 28 onwards: 30 per cent reductions on many items.

John Richmond Shop, 2 Newburgh Street, London W1 (071-734 5782)

Jan 2 onwards: One third off all items, including Destroy jacket reduced from £33.80 to £22.5.

Edina Ronay, 141 King's Road, London SW3 (071-352 1085)

Jan 5 onwards: Between 40 and 50 per cent reductions, including 1940s-style evening crepe dress from £109 to £217.

Scorch House, 2 Brompton Road, London SW1 (071-581 2151), 94 Regent Street, W1 (071-734 0203) and branches nationwide

Dec 28 for about three weeks: Reductions from about 30 per cent, including women's round-neck knitwear reduced from £99.50 to £49.50.

7000, Manchester — Market Street (061-236 3200), Stoke-on-Trent — Lamb Street (0782 302331), Leeds — The Headrow (0532 431313), Oxford — 27 Westgate Street (0865 244991).

Dec 28 for at least three weeks: Reductions of 30 per cent, and 50 per cent across the mainline Ally Capellino collection Hearts of Oak, Ally Capellino menswear and Mini Capellino. Wool print palazzo pants reduced from £149 to £75, jersey wrap skirts to £69.

Caroline Charles, 56-57 Beauchamp Place, London, SW3 (071-225 3197)

Dec 28 for at least three weeks: Reductions of 30 per cent, and 50 per cent across the mainline Ally Capellino collection Hearts of Oak, Ally Capellino menswear and Mini Capellino. Wool print palazzo pants reduced from £149 to £75, jersey wrap skirts to £69.

Riceam, St George's Lane, Canterbury (0227 766866)

Dec 28-Jan 23: Between 33 and 50 per cent off selected items.

FASHION

Austin Reed, 103-113 Regent Street, London W1 (071-734 6789) and branches

Dec 28 for three weeks (Dec 29 in London's City branches): Full 40 per cent off blouses and antique tartan walking shorts. All designer wear, including Paul Costelloe, Yves Saint Laurent and KL by Karl Lagerfeld, half price. One third off all knitwear and more than one third off shirts. Account customers get an extra 5 per cent off sale goods. Dec 28-30.

Aquascutum, 100 Regent Street, London W1 (071-734 0690)

Dec 28-Jan: Women's camel hair coats reduced from £749 to £299. Men's raincoats from £175 to £115. Men's blazers include wool coats reduced from £325 to £250, suits from £295 to £195. Duffel coats, cotton leisure jackets, cashmere knitwear, crested sweatshirts and long-sleeved polo shirts all reduced by half.

Blazer, 170 Oxford Street, London W1 (071-637 3001) and branches nationwide

Dec 28 for approx two weeks: Good reductions.

The Mulberry Sale

40% OFF selected items

Start Monday 28th December at 10am (open until 7.30pm first day only).

SALES GUIDE

from Liberty fabrics, Bally shoes and Bechstein pianos to Divertimenti kitchenware and Sharps' fitted bedrooms

Simpson, Piccadilly, London W1 (071-734 2002)

Dec 28-Jan 30: 25 to 30 per cent off all stock, including half-price Daks and designer wear for men and women. Daks wool jacket reduced from £149 to £74, matching skirt from £159 to £79. Michael Sungari evening suit from £389 to £194. Valentino wool dress from £309 to £154. Daks men's cashmere jacket reduced from £699 to £349. Simpson suits from £219 to £149, raincoats from £109 to £109. Derek Rose pyjamas from £49 to £29. Also, 30 to 50 per cent off selected Rayne and Ferragamo shoes.

Stirling Cooper, 6 Picton Place, London W1 (071-487 3783). Call for local stockist.

Dec 28 for one month: Pin-striped double-breasted jacket reduced from £69.99 to £34.95, trousers from £34.95. Top £19.95, gilet from £29.99 to £19.95. Floral print blouse from £24.99 to £19.99. Sarong skirt from £29.99 to £19.95 and floral print dress from £34.99 to £29.95. Many substantial reductions.

Thomas Pink, 35 Dover Street, London W1 (071-493 6775) and branches

Dec 29-end Jan: Big reductions on a number of items.

Whistles, 12-14 St Christopher's Place, London, W1 (071-352 4484) and branches

Now until end Jan: Reductions include Moschino satin parka in Cheap and Chic range from £490 to £245.

• SHOES**Bally, 246 Oxford Street, London W1 (071-629 6045) and all branches**

Dec 28-end Jan: Good reductions.

Manolo Blahnik, 49-50 Old Church Street, London SW3 (071-352 3863)

Jan 15 onwards: 45 per cent or more off designer shoes for men and women.

Charles Jourdan, 39 Brompton Road, London, SW3 (071-581 3333)

Sale now on: 30 to 50 per cent off women's and men's shoes.

Fratelli Rossetti, 196 Sloane Street, London, SW1 (071-259 6397) and 177 New Bond Street, W1 (071-491 7066)

Jan 6 for four weeks: 30 to 50 per cent off shoes, accessories and leather goods.

James Taylor & Son, 4 Paddington Street, Marylebone High Street, London W1M 3LA (071-935 4149)

Now until end Jan: Bespoke shoemaker offering charity promotion. Anyone trading in their least-loved shoes can claim £50 off a pair of new, made-to-measure James Taylor shoes. Discarded footwear will be donated to the Bowdary Shelter for the homeless.

Robert Clergerie, 67 Wigmore Street, London W1 (071-935 3601)

Jan 4 onwards: 20 per cent off shoes for the first two weeks and 40 per cent off later.

Russell & Bromley, 24 New Bond Street, London W1 (071-629 6903) and branches

From Dec 23: Reductions nationwide.

The Small and Tall Shoe Shop, 71 York Street, London W1 (071-723 5321)

Jan 6-9 for large sizes Jan 14-16 for small sizes: Reductions on women's footwear in rare and difficult fittings (only very small sizes 13-2½ and very large sizes 8½-11½). Many shoes, boots and sandals at half price or less. No extra charge for special colours or odd sizes ordered during sale.

• INTERIORS

Casa Fina, 132 Notting Hill Gate, London W1 (071-221 9112), 9 Central Avenue, The Market, Covent Garden, WC2 (071-636 0289) and branches

Jan 14-end Jan: Up to 50 per cent off lighting, ornaments and glassware.

Colourwash, 165 Chamberlayne Road, London NW1 (071-459 9918)

Dec 29-Jan 30: Up to 40 per cent off bathroom suites, including Santini's Deco Berkeley Jacob Delafon cast-iron baths from £150, and brand-name suites at £350.

The Connex Shop, 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 (071-589 7401)

Jan 2-10: 30 per cent off upholstery: discounts throughout the store.

Jane Churchill, 135 Sloane Street, London SW1 (071-637 913)

Christopher Place, St Albans, Herts (0727 860293).

Dec 28-end Jan: Reductions on selected fabrics, wallpapers and home accessories.

Crucial Trading, 77 Westbourne Park Road, London W2 (071-221 9000) and Barnabas Street, SW1 (071-730 0075)

Jan 5-Feb 6: Up to 40 per cent off ten different steel floor-coverings, including B&G Country Plaid reduced from £11.65 per sq yd to £6.99 per sq yd; £372 candy-stripe luxury quality Barley twist from £18.35 per sq yd to £17.75 per sq yd; £892 Chin tessier from Siam range from £25 per sq yd to £17.50 per sq yd.

Corres Mexican Tiles, 15 Ewer Street, London SE1 (071-261 0941)

Jan 30: Half price terracotta, glazed terracotta, ceramic floor tiles, hand-made Mexican wall and wattle tiles and Canterra stone tiles 60 per cent off Bono ceramic tiles.

Descamps, 197 Sloane Street, London SW1 (071-235 6957)

Dec 29 for four weeks: At least 35 per cent off whole collection of bedlinen, robes and towels.

Do-It-All – branches nationwide

Now until Jan 21: Reductions on paints, wallpaper, tiles, doors and window frames.

Do-It-All – branches nationwide

reductions in own silverware in four patterns. Shoppers during sale are automatically entered into a raffle for £1,000-worth of merchandise of own choice.

Meltons, 27 Bruton Place, London W1 (071-409 2938)

Jan 4-30: 15 per cent discount on all stock of antique and contemporary decorative pieces including architectural door furniture, quilts, tapestry cushions, watercolours, glassware, lacquer and sole objects. Many items reduced by 25 per cent including hand-painted candle-shades, Limoges boxes and antique hutchware.

Oggetti, 135 Fulham Road, London SW3 (071-581 2088)

Jan 9-end Jan: Reductions of 10 per cent on all stock and 70 per cent off selected items.

Papercase, 3 Haymarket, London W1 (071-225 2647) and branches

From Dec 28: Huge reductions including Christmas stock reduced by half.

Paris Ceramics, 538 King's Road, London SW1 (071-371 7775)

From Dec 28: Reductions of 30 per cent on Wedgwood, Royal Worcester, Spode, Aynsley, Villeroy & Boch, Mintons, Royal Crown Derby and Limoges china also in Hermès, Cartier Collection and Deshouilliers designer china, plus Aplisc and Thomas informal china. 30 per cent off Saccard, St Louis, Stuart, Tudor and Royal Brierley glasses. Up to 50 per cent



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John Stefanidis Fabrics, Furniture and Objects, 261 Fulham Road, London SW3 (071-352 3537)

Dec 29 for six weeks: All fabrics reduced by 10 per cent including the Stripes and Foilies and Linen collections. Glass table lamps reduced from £135 to £108, oval laminated tray from £75 to £60, silver-plated pots from £62 to £49.60. Reductions on stationery boxes, both fabric and wallpaper covered. Items can be sent by mail order for out-of-London shoppers.

Robert Stephenson, 1 Elstree Street, London SW3 (071-225 2343)

Jan 4-16: Huge clearance sale includes complete floors in terracotta and stone, remainders, samples, old sizes, murals and border tiles. 18 sq yd antique white terracotta floor reduced from £2,000 to £850. Murals include "Constellation" from £500 to £250, "Dance" from £450 to £225 and "Balloon" half-price at £100.

Maples, 145 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (071-387 7000)

Dec 26-end Jan: First-day offers, three-day offers and seven-day offers throughout store. "Early bird" window features many items at half-price or less. For example, Marquis wall unit reduced from £1,799 to £799. Marquis table and four chairs from £1,799 to £799. Complimentary bottle of champagne to first six people in queue. First day only, free underlay on all carpets (min. order £399). First three days only, 80 per cent wool/20 per cent nylon twist-pile carpet reduced from £22.99 per sq yd to £15.99 per sq yd. First seven days only, Buckingham Axminster carpet reduced from £31.99 per sq yd to £21 per sq yd. Up to 25 per cent off Derwent and Peter Guild upholstery; up to 25 per cent off soft furnishings and fabrics; up to

THE VINTAGE MAGAZINE CO.

20 per cent off Drexel Heritage American furniture and Deco/Pickled Pine collections.

Omega Furniture, Delamere Road, Cheshunt (0992 28494); 21 Old Town, Stevenage (0438 722412)

Sale now on: Up to £500 off selected suites and 10 per cent off new orders during sale.

Purves & Purves, 83

Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (071-580 8223)

Dec 28-Jan 30 (Jan 1-10am-5pm): 10 per cent off all oak furniture and upholstery with bigger discounts off selected items.

Sharps Bedrooms branches nationwide (for details of local branch and new brochure call free on 0800 789789)

Dec 27-end Jan: Savings of up to 50 per cent on many of Sharps' most popular fitted bedroom ranges. Orders filled free with five-year guarantee.

Simon Horn Furniture, 117-121 Wandsworth Bridge Road, London SW6 (071-731 2779)

Jan 4-30: 30 to 50 per cent discounts on selected beds and furniture and 15 per cent reduction on divans and mattresses including prototypes, discontinued designs, cancelled orders and unusual sizes. Carved Madame du Barry bed reduced from £3,462 to £2,423 and a rosewood Lit Bateau day-bed from £2,013 to £1,000. All new orders placed for beds during sale reduced by £150.

• KITCHENWARE

Divertimenti, 45-47 Wigmore Street, London W1 (071-935 0689) and 139 Fulham Road, London SW3 (071-581 8065)

Jan 9-30: Up to 50 per cent discounts on TV and audio equipment, video recorders, washing machines and refrigerators.

Dec 27-end Jan: Substantial reductions on TV and audio equipment, video recorders, washing machines and refrigerators.

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• KITCHENWARE

Divertimenti, 45-47 Wigmore Street

John Higgins selects his opera favourites, while Stephen Pettitt and Hilary Finch pick the classics

Eccentric blast from the past

Rossini had his 200th birthday. Claudio Abbado and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe celebrated it in style with a new *Barbiere di Siviglia*. Plácido Domingo taking the title role (DG 435 763-2, 2 CDs). Sir Neville Marriner and his St Martin-in-the-Fields players provided a fizzy *Turco in Italia* (Philips 434 128-2, 2 CDs). Otherwise it was a very thin year for Italian opera. Fortunately other countries were there to provide the pleasures.

The year's best opera set: *Die Frau ohne Schatten* by several lengths. Strauss's score at times needs all the help it can get. Sir Georg Solti, celebrating his eightieth birthday, and the Vienna Philharmonic provide this in abundance. Starry cast, led by Julia Varady and Hildegard

CLASSICAL RECORDS

Behrens' sumptuous recording (Decca 436 243-2, 3 CDs).

The year's discovery: Massenet's *Chérubin*, concerning the further adventures of Mozart's page after he left the Almaviva's household, contains some shimmeringly beautiful music amidst the froth and pastiche. The quality of the Munich Radio Orchestra under Pinhas Steinberg will surely encourage an opera house somewhere to stage it. But will they achieve a cast to match RCA's quartet of Americans (Von Stade, Anderson, Upshaw and Ramay)? (09026 60593-2, 2 CDs).

The year's rediscovery: the gentle and often bewitching songs of

Messager are recalled on extracts from three of his best operettas — *Véronique*, *Monsieur Beaucaire*, *Les Petites Michu*. EMI drew these from recordings made by Jules Gressier and the Lamoureux Orchestra in the early 1950s (0777 7 67512 2, 1, 2 CDs). A chance too to hear the quality singing of Camille Maurane, Claude Devos and Nadine Renaux.

The year's eccentricity: the great and some of the not-quite-so-good singing the unexpected on Prime Voce Party (Nimbus, NI 7839, 1 CD). Here are Enrico Caruso — a rare venture into the English repertory with his rendition of Sullivan's "The Lost Chord" — Alexander Kipnis ("Little Jack Horner") and Elisabeth Schumann, who ricks the tenor's aria from Zeller's *Der Vogelfänger* and proceeds to sing it in English.



Enrico Caruso: a rare venture into the English repertory

STEPHEN PETTITT

Since I was rather severe on Philip Pickett's minimal version of Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers in concert the other week, let me redress the balance by putting his version of the same composer's *Ofeo* with the New London Consort (Decca L'Oiseau-lyre Florilegium 433 545-2) on my list of records of the year. I could argue against some of the voices Pickett chooses (though not that of John Mark Ainsley), but what he achieves is a wonderful domestic atmosphere such as might well have pertained at the ducal court in Mantua when the piece was first performed. The presentation is painstakingly researched and argued.

Next comes John Eliot Gardiner's follow-up to his prize-winning account of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* last year — a vivacious and inspiring reading of the earlier

Mass in C (Deutsche Grammophon Archiv). This work in effect pays extravagant homage to Haydn's late mass settings. Gardiner thoroughly revels in its thrilling inventiveness, giving a typically thrusting but also spiritual account.

Sir Georg Solti's eighth birthday celebrations inspired a number of reissues and some bristling new recordings. I have chosen his live accounts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra of Debussy's *Nocturnes*, *La Mer* and the *Prelude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (Decca 436 468-2), not least because of the knife-edge quality of the playing. Although these are not single performances but amalgamations of two (*La Mer*, three (*l'après-midi*) and four (*Nocturnes*)) readings and/or patching sessions, the atmosphere is keen, and the acoustic of Chicago's Orchestra Hall gives a marvellous clarity.

STEPHEN PETTITT

Memories are made of this

interpretation of these late Schubert songs and his supple, light oak bass-baritone is every bit as happy in German as it is in Welsh.

Kagan's chamber music-making with, among others, his wife Natalia Gutman, was an equally important part of his life as his solo work was. It shows in his Bach. These performances are the fruit of Kagan's years

of listening and conversing rather than of personality projection. Totally devoid of either mannerism or cliché, his diamond-bright claim reveals many secrets at the heart of these works. The way he orders them, too — each piece rising by a fifth to the final exultant C Major Sonata — is a revelation in itself.

More Schubert from Christoph

Prégardien, the fresh-voiced German tenor better known for his work in baroque opera and oratorio. His *Die Schöne Müllerin* (Deutsche Harmonie Mundi 05472 772732) races with Schubert's millstream, as the beating heart of a young, easily disillusioned miller's apprentice is recreated with startlingly vivid imagination in the context of the rattling,

thrumming fortepiano accompaniment of Andreas Staier.

Just as Prégardien takes nothing for granted in this most abundantly recorded of song cycles, so Brigitte Fassbaender hurls herself at Liszt's songs with a passionate enthusiasm. This selection of 18 songs, accompanied by Jean-Yves Thibaudet (Decca 430 512-2), defines the unique contours and confirms the stature of Liszt as songwriter.

HILARY FINCH

Out of the West Country, one of the year's best

The killer of grunge rock conquers all

In a year when rock was dominated by all things grungy and American, it took a 21-year-old woman from the Dorset village of Corcombe to land the killer blow. Her name was Poly Harvey and her three-piece group P J Harvey unveiled a bewitching post-punk amalgam of blues, folk and hardcore rock on *Dry* (Too Pure CDD010), an utterly beguiling debut.

With its hairshirt production and minimalist song arrangements, *Dry* was the perfect vehicle for Harvey's jagged guitar motifs and icy wail of a voice. Propelled by Robert Ellis's locomotive drumming, songs like "O Stells" and the single "Sheela-na-Gig" announced a major homegrown talent.

From Seattle, at the epicentre of the grunge explosion, emerged Pearl Jam, a group superficially cast in the Nirvana mould, but denounced by the arbiters of cool as too conventional in musical outlook to rate as bona fide heroes of the new order.

Who cares? One listen to their awesome debut, *Ten* (Epic 468894), was enough to render their pretence status on the hipster academic. Powered by the impressive drumming technique of Dave Krusen and dominated by the distinctive vocal timbre of Eddie Vedder, *Ten* was a devastating combination of melody and muscle, a monster of an album that stalked the killing fields between metal and grunge.

Sonny Landreth is the quiet slide-guitar genius who used to play in John Hiatt's band, the Goners, and Hiatt was among those who turned out to lend a hand on Landreth's estimable solo debut *Outward Bound* (BMG 72445-11032).

But the success of the album owed nothing to celebrity endorsements and everything to Landreth's superlative feel for merging a loping rock 'n' roll beat with the blues and zydeco music of his hometown of La

JAZZ RECORDS

Most pleasant surprise of the year is the abrupt transformation of Donald Harrison, stone-faced, besuited neo-hopper, into a Mardi Gras raver.

Indian Blues (Candid CDD79514) found the saxophonist returning to his home town roots and concocting a potent New Orleans gumbo with the help of the ubiquitous Dr John and the drum-based charts of The Guardians of the Flame Mardi Gras Indians. Although Harrison looks bashful as he poses in his carnival feathers on the cover, the music swings with abandon.

Elsewhere many of the

young pretenders have been content to produce tame copies of old records. Pianist Beany Green proved that it is possible to be both respectful and soulful on *Testifyin'* (Blue Note CDP798171), a trio session recorded live at New York's Village Vanguard. A former member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, Green revived the old Blue Note virtues of impeccable musicianship and an irrepressible soul beat.

On the British front, Courtney Pine re-surfaced with his most individual display so far, Humphrey Lyttelton staged a strong showing in the company of the venerable Acker Bilk, and an impressive debut album arrived in the shape of *The Waiting Game* (Linn AKD-018), by the singer Claire Martin. Martin is perhaps the most polished jazz performer to emerge in this country in the past three or four years. Not many other singers would have the self-confidence to handle a programme ranging from Rodgers and Hart to Joni Mitchell, Sammy Cahn and Thomas Dolby.

What label do you apply to another British vocalist, Sheila Chandra? World music? Indo-folk fusion? Weaving My Ancestors Voices (Real World CDRW24) was an intriguing demonstration of the power and subtlety of the unaccompanied human voice, at once austere yet restful. And, amidst the four-disc retrospective of B.B. King's reign as *King of the Blues* (MCA MCAD4-10677), The party line states that King progressively sold out as he reached a mass audience. The tracks here — including the sensuous mid-70s collaborations with the Crusaders — knock that idea firmly on the head.

CLIVE DAVIS

called "Back to Bayou Teche", the most uplifting piece of music I heard all year.

Noisier, and considerably more eye-catching, was Carve featuring failed electropop chanteuse Toni Halliday in her new role as English rock's most photographed vamp. Their breathtaking debut, *Doppelganger* (Anxious ANXL P 77), combined screeching guitar noise and galloping drums with an almost anodyne sense of melody.

I was told that R.E.M.'s *Automatic For The People* (Warner Bros. 93624-5055) would grow on me, and so it has. With so much at stake after the success of last year's *Out of Time*, it took real courage and panache to return with an album that steers such a calm and considered course through the ever more clamorous minefield of modern rock.

DAVID SINCLAIR

ROCK RECORDS



Landreth: slide genius

ayette, Louisiana. Landreth is the only guitarist I know who can make an electric guitar sound like an accordion, a trick he pulls on a soulful romp

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Highlights for the New Year include: Harold Pinter's 'No Man's Land' with Sir Dirk Bogarde and Sir Michael Hordern (New Year's Day); Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night' with Joss Ackland, Iain Cuthbertson, Eve Matheson and Michael Maloney (3rd January); and two adaptations by Tom Stoppard of plays by Arthur Schnitzler — 'Undiscovered Country' with Ronald Pickup (10th January) and 'Dalliance' with Hugh Grant and Douglas Hodge (17th January).

To be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 tomorrow, Sunday, 27th December at 7.30pm

(with the chance to find out what happens next in Perry

Pontiac's 'Hamlet Part II' starring Harriet Walter and Peter Jeffrey, broadcast the following evening at 8.30pm)

Hamlet is available on Random House Audiobooks Cassette (£15.99) Compact Disc (£24.99).

Random House Audiobooks Cassette (£15.99) Compact Disc (£24.99).

Curtain up on the top ten

Jeremy Kingston picks the best antidotes to post-Christmas boredom for children — and parents — around the country

Christmas may be nearly over, but the party goes on for children as the school holidays stretch on into the New Year. Once the novelty of the new presents has worn off, a family trip to a children's show could be just the ticket to offset boredom and frayed nerves. Pantomime is the traditional family entertainment for this time of year, but it was invented for adults with no thought given to capturing a young audience. Hence, nearly all the heroes and heroines are grown up, with their hopes pinned on marrying into royalty (and those who aren't get themselves lost in woods early on). These days, it is modern authors (counting Kipling as modern) who create boy-heroes and girl-heroes for shows that aren't pantomimes, yet include the spectacle and magic effects that have been the spectacular trademarks of traditional pantomime. Some step on to the stage from the pages of a book (Mowgli, Gerta, the Narnia lot, Roald Dahl's *youthful adventures*; others are created especially for the theatre. Nearly all of these shows suggest that a mysterious world of quest and test lies just a hair's breadth away from everyday life, where strange powers can be taken for granted, but must be used for purposes that are good. Here is my top ten selection of shows for children around the country.

• LONDON

The Snow Queen
Young Vic, 66 The Cut,
London SE1 (071-928 6363).
Until Jan 9.

Nick Stafford's lively adaptation of Hans Andersen's best tale returns for a second Christmas, staged in the round (square, actually) beneath four tall trees. Sonia Ritter's Gerda is a game heroine, her voice urgent but never artificial as she makes her way to the Frozen North in search of the vanished Kai (Wilbert Johnson). Flowers soar from the ground in the enchanted garden, and two gossiping cows, clutching black shiny handbags, are great characters. Moments of healthy sadness co-exist with the excitement, and there is unusual sympathy for the Snow Queen (Jane Maud).

• LONDON

The Witches
Duke of York's Theatre, St
Martin's Lane, London WC2
(071-536 9837). Until Jan 23.

A coven of really gruesome witches, wearing gloves to conceal their claws, threaten a boy (Karen Biffett), his eccentric but admirable grandmother (Jane Whithouse) and the entire child population of Britain. Roald Dahl's award-winning bestseller, exceptionally well adapted by David Wood, is packed with sinister incidents, including the boy's transformation into a mouse by the witches' snarling leader, Dorothy Ann Gould. The slapstick cooks are fun and the show offends most of the canons of political correctness, going in for

smellism, baldism, shortism, sexism and witchism. Children love it.

• BAGNOR

The Christmas Cat and the Pudding Pirates
Watermill, Bagshot, near
Newbury, Berkshire (0635 46044).
Until Jan 9.

Tenth anniversary year of Christopher Llewellyn's rollicking adventure where Jolly Roger boards the Good Ship Santa's cookshop Cookie, renowned for making the best of all Christmas puddings, for which JR has an insatiable appetite. Paul Ryan's Cat dashes about and tries to be brave but mermaid Myrtle, a vision in sequins, is the one who saves the feast. The theatre has been turned into a ship, and the audience must enter through a pirate-detector. Persons carrying cutlasses will be required to leave them in the cloakroom.

• BIRMINGHAM

Snow Queen
Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham (021-643 1231).
Until Jan 23.

World stage premiere of this version, by Leslie Bricusse, of Dickens's evergreen Christmas ghost story. Bricusse wrote the music for the film and here teams up again with Anthony Newley as Scrooge, his first straight acting role in the UK for years. Jon Pertwee plays Jacob Marley — watch for the face in the doorknob — wearing lots of white make-up and a tight wig. Stratford Johns spreads good cheer as the Ghost of Christmas Present and Tom Watt is Tiny Tim's

overworked dad. Many weird effects and all set in the proper Dickensian world.

• CARDIFF

The Dark Is Rising
Sherman Theatre,
Senghenydd Road, Cardiff
(0222 230451). Until Jan 9.

This adventure through past times and other worlds is adapted by the team who staged last year's *Matilda* from the second of Susan Cooper's five mystical fantasies. On the eve of his eleventh birthday Will discovers he has magic powers that he must use to find the six talismans needed to loose the grip of the evil Darkness. Nia Davies, last year's goodie Matilda, this time plays one of the baddies. Masks, special effects and interfering roots played by puppets suspended from long rods.

• DUNDEE

Merlin the Magnificent
Repertory Theatre, Tay Square,
Dundee (0382 23530).
Until Jan 9.

Stuart Patterson's tale of Arthur's

MARILYN KINSWILL



boyhood was his first play for children and he has now reworked it, introducing more of the popular slapstick between Sir Hector and his son Kay. A huge circular disc decorated with signs of the zodiac, fills the stage, with woods, castle and cave in the offing. Russell Hunter's awesome Merlin sends shivers down the spine as he battles with the dangerous Morgana-le-Fey over the future king. Arthur's friend Gwen helps.

• GLASGOW

The Jungle Book
Citizens' Theatre, Gorbals,
Glasgow (041-429 0022).
Until Jan 23.

Kaa the python sheds her skin onstage in a production by Giles Havery creating marvelous visual effects. The movements of Bagheera, Shere Khan and the other animals have been choreographed by Frank McConnell to be sinuous, lumbering or whatever, in Kenny Miller's exotic settings of palms, rocks, bunches of bananas and tree house. A striking ensemble piece with a couple of songs (not

Disney's), tracing Mowgli's life from man-cub to manhood. Myles Rudge adapted the Kipling stories.

• HULL

Gargling with Jelly
Spring Street Theatre, Spring
Street, Hull (0482 23636).
Until Jan 16.

Jimmy is the last boy in the country who hasn't taken Dr Sensible's medicine. Everyone else has been persuaded how much nicer it is not to have birthdays or Christmas or any fun and certainly not to write poetry, which is what Jimmy likes doing. The audience is urged to warn him when his poem has been drossed or whenever Louise Kerr's sensibly-dressed and cackling Doctor is closing in. With Mrs Scarybaggy (Nicky Goldie) remembering the antidote in time? Brian Patten's jolly show uses many props, and the title alone is going to suggest a way of brightening up the dinner table.

• LEEDS

Granny and the Gorilla
Courtyard Theatre, West
Yorkshire Playhouse, Quarry Hill
Mount, Leeds (0532 442111).
Until Jan 9.

Lots of noise, flashing lights, plenty of dancing and Shinda, a magical mountain gorilla, in Stuart Paterson's "hairsty fairy story". Tilly Vosburgh looks like an evil Mae West in her amazing sequence of over-the-top gowns, each of which manages to include a scrap of some furry animal. One of Granny's grandsons is hired over to the witch's side and must be rescued with the aid of the gorilla, whose reward is to fly back to Africa in a biplane. Packed with special effects. The children end up dancing on the stage to African music.

• OXFORD

Fooling About
Playhouse, Beaumont Street,
Oxford (0865 798600).
Until Jan 3.

Two separate tales with an interval between. The first is a touching romantic tale of Princess Foolina (Poly Kemp) searching for a cure to heal her sick dad and hoping for a prince too, if poss. Part 2 follows the raucous, rambunctious adventures of scampgrace Tom Fool (Graham Sullivan), who is far from being as useless as his parents think he is. Staged by the same team — writer Renata Allen, director John Retallack — whose *Magic Storybook* last year won the Martini/TMA Children's Theatre Award.

Best of the rest

LONDON

The Tales of Beatrix Potter
Hunca Munca, Peter Rabbit and
Squirrel Nutkin from Frederick
Ashton's 1971 ballet film adapted for
live performance, presented on a
double-bill with Ashton's delightful

The Dream. Royal Opera House, Covent
Garden, WC2 (071-240 1066).
Wed, Thurs, Jan 2, 5, 6, 9, 13.
19, 23pm; mat Jan 2, 2.30pm.

**Pinchy Kobi and the Seven
Duppies** The eight actors of The
Posse in a marvelously inventive
variation on the Scrooge story.
Recommended. Tricycle, 269 Kilburn High
Road, NW6 (071-329 0000). Eves
8pm, mats Sat, 4pm. Runs until

end of Jan.

Puppetry and verse. The Puppet
Theatre Garage celebrates its tenth
anniversary with a new show, *A
Sheaf of Verse*, combining the
words of Robert Louis Stevenson,
William Roscoe and George Mac-
Donald (for adults and over-fives).
Little Venice, Blomfield Road,
W9 (071-249 6576). Continues

daily to Jan 6. 3pm, £4, £5.

Aladdin Enjoyable pantomime with
strong characters and foot-tapping
songs. Theatre Royal Stratford East,
Gerry Rizzo Square, London E15
(081-534 0310). Daily, 2.15pm
and 7.15pm. From Jan 1, Tues-Sat.

Cinderella in boots A modernised
version of the festive favourite by the
London Bubble, performed in the round.
Young Chinese actress Pui
Fan Lee plays Cinderella complete with
transparent Doc Martens. Albany Empire, Douglas Way,
SE8 (071-237 1663). Continues

daily to Jan 2 (except this Thurs),

variously at 3.30pm, 5pm and
7.15pm.

**The Lion, The Witch and The
Wardrobe** This year's excursion to
Narnia, by courtesy of Vanessa Ford
Productions. Somewhat better than
others in the collection. Royal Lyceum,
Royal Portuguese Street, Albany Empire, Douglas Way,
SE8 (071-237 1663). Continues

daily to Jan 2 (except this Thurs),

variously at 3.30pm, 5pm and
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daily to Jan 2 (except this Thurs),

variously at 3.30pm, 5pm and
7.15pm.

Concerts at the Barbican Howard
Blake conducts the Wren Orchestra in
a performance of his classic *The
Snowman*, narrated by Aled Jones,
and featuring boy soprano Anthony
Mellor (tomorrow 3pm). Fraser
Goulding conducts the London Con-
cert Orchestra in a *Teddy Bears*
concert featuring all the children's
favourites with prizes for the biggest

and best bear, as well as an appear-
ance by Father Christmas (Mon,
3pm). Barbican Hall, Silk Street, EC2
(071-638 8891).

OUT OF TOWN

Armagh The Planetarium's after-
Christmas show, "Captives of the
Sun", uses the latest images from
Nasa to guide you through the solar
system, narrated by Peter Jones.
The Planetarium, College Hill,
Armagh, Northern Ireland (0361
523689). Wed-Jan 4 (except Jan
21, daily at 2pm and 3pm).

Bristol Young NADFAS, the
national organisation which encour-
ages an interest in the visual and
performing arts, presents *Dr
Musikus*, a comical opera for adults
and children, composed by Antony
Hopkins and performed by The
London Opera Players. The Players
will also be conducting workshops for
NADFAS members between eight
and 13 years (0934 852245).
Clifton College Preparatory
School, Northgate Road, Clifton.
Performance Dec 30, 4pm.

Cambridge Exhibition that looks
at how folk and fairy tales from
different continents have been passed
down through the generations.
Cambridge and County Folk
Museum, 213 Castle Street (0223
355159). Jan 2-17, Tues-Sat.

Leicester Julia Barstley directs a
cast of four adults and three children
in *Frankenstein*, the Gothic tale that
spawned a thousand movies. Some
mud in the show (not recommended
for under-12s).

Harrow Studio, Belgrave
Gate (0533 534767). Today, Wed,
3pm and 5pm, Mon, Tues,
Thurs, Fri, Sat; continues until Jan
16 at various times, £4-8.

Southampton Granville Saxon
directs Sinbad's Arabian Nights with
sumts, glitter and, apparently, a full
40 thieves.

Stratford-Upon-Avon A special
show of Winnie the Pooh memorabilia
is joined the Teddy Bear Museum's
collection of bears from 1903 to
present day.

The Teddy Bear Museum, 19
Greenhill Street (071-293 5099).
Tues-Wed, 2.30pm and
6.30pm; Thurs, 3pm; then
continues at various times until
Jan 16.

Warwick *Christmas Cat and the
Pudding Pirates*, billed as a rolick-
ing, fun-filled Christmas fantasy for
over-fours.

Arts Centre, University of
Warwick, Coventry (0203 524534).
Today, Mon-Wed, 2.30pm and
7pm; Thurs, Jan 2, 9, 10.30am and
2.30pm, Jan 8, 7pm. £5-£8.

KARI KNIGHT

CONCERTS

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MALCOLM SARGENT FESTIVAL CHOIR

Baritone Trumpeters of the Grenadier Guards

Sopr: SUSAN BULLOCK Mezzo: SALLY BURGESS

Tenor: ANTHONY MEER Baritone: DONALD DAWELL

On: THEIVING AGE! Dir: David Aldous

Stev: William Duff Music: David Aldous

Light: Michael Tipton Set: Alan Ayckbourn

Cost: Alan Ayckbourn

Light: Michael Tipton

BBC1

- 7.00 Follow that Goblin.** Cartoon (r) (39341) 7.30 *Barney's Christmas Surprise* (r) (415249) 7.35 *Animal World*. Nature series narrated by Derek Griffiths. This morning, a profile of the robin (s) (70901007) 7.45 *Quick Draw McRaw*. Cartoon western (r) (4147404) 7.50 *Peter Pan and the Pirates*. Animated version of J.M. Barrie's classic tale. (Ceefax) (s) (7662220) 8.15 *Chucklevision*. Paul and Barry cause chaos in a deserted house (s) (2960442) 8.35 *Chipmunks*. Feature cartoon (1765423)
- 9.00 Game Live!** Sarah Greene and Philip Schofield introduce a special edition featuring a celebrity Run the Risk with the Blue Peter team taking on Brookside and a Children's BBC's trio; plus the star-studded Christmas show *Show Green and the Seven Idiots* (s) (63064)
- 10.00 The Chronicles of Narnia.** Based on the novels of C.S. Lewis (r). (Ceefax) (s) (63882)
- 11.00 Film: Annie** (1981). Musical set during the Depression in New York starring Aileen Quinn as Little Orphan Annie, whose luck appears to be changing when she is temporarily adopted by a billionaire (Albert Finney). Directed by John Huston. (Ceefax) (90713)
- 1.00 Cartoon Double Bill** (9252436) 1.20 News and weather (39451794)
- 1.25 All! All!** Last year's Christmas edition. Yvette confides that she is pregnant and threatens to reveal the father's name (r). (Ceefax) (5639133)
- 2.10 Film: Escape to Victory** (1981) starring Michael Caine and Sylvester Stallone. A former England football star, imprisoned in a prison of war camp during the second world war, and his German captor, also a former international player, decide to stage a match. However, escape is more important than victory. With Pele, Bobby Moore and Cesario Ardiles. Directed by John Huston. (Ceefax) (503065)
- 4.05 Simply the Best.** Highlights of Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean's ice show, which recently toured the United Kingdom (s) (4302930)
- 4.55 Final Score** (3853355)
- 5.05 News with Jennie Bond.** (Ceefax) Weather (2139882)
- 5.15 Dad's Army.** Extended episode of the Home Guard comedy, starring Arthur Lowe, John Le Mesurier and Clive Dunn. The Walmington Sea platoon takes on its rivals from Eastgate in an initiative test (r). (Ceefax) (6474684)
- 6.10 Big Breakfast.** *Celebrity Special*. Jim Davidson and referee John Virgo are joined by Ruth Madoc, Patrick Moore, Anthea Turner, Dennis Taylor, Alison Fisher and Willie Thorne. (Ceefax) (s) (635681)
- 6.50 Noel's Christmas House Party.** Noel Edmonds presents a "Gotcha" Oscar to Tony Blackburn (s) (569369)
- 7.45 Last of the Summer Wine.** Bill Owen, Peter Sallis and Brian Wilde star in Roy Clarke's long-running comedy. In this last of the series the genial trio are put in charge of the annual gala parade (Ceefax) (s) (803854)
- 8.15 Lovejoy.** Ian McShane stars in this Christmas episode in which a savage attack on a second world war filer from Czechoslovakia leads Lovejoy to Prague. (Ceefax) (s) (32851586)
- 9.50 News with Jennie Bond.** (Ceefax) Sport and weather (100355)



Playing hard to get: Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan (10.05pm)

10.05 Film: When Harry Met Sally (1989). Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan star in this romantic comedy about a man and a woman who believe that members of the opposite sex can never be just good friends. When they meet again, by chance, after a five year break they begin to change their minds. Directed by Rob Reiner. (Ceefax) (s) (345220)

11.40 Film: Huds (1963, b/w) starring Paul Newman as the leaveaway son of a Texas cattleman (Menzel Douglas). When the ranch faces a crisis Huds shows his true colours. Also starring Patricia Neal, who, as with Douglas, won an Oscar for her performance. Directed by Martin Ritt (133607). Ends at 1.30am

SKY MOVIES GOLD

- 8.00 The Waltons' Crisis** (1990). Home-spun drama from the mountain (56772)
- 10.00 The Best of Berry Hill** (1974). Comedy sketches (22997)
- 0.00am *Danger Bay* (75529) 6.30 *Elephant Boy* (30365) 7.00 *Fox Factory* (2222629)
- 12.00 Barnaby Jones** (67689) 1.00pm *Film: Say One For Me* (1959) starring Bing Crosby and Debbie Reynolds (89133) 3.00 *Cartoon* (79529) 4.00 *The Duke of Hazzard* (61724) 5.00 *Joe Vicks* (1980) 6.00 *Tom Haverford's Family* (2025) 6.30 *The Royal Tenenbaums* (Year in Crisis) (57559) 6.00 *Unsolved Mysteries* (17807) 8.00 *Cops I* (67978) 9.30 *Cops II* (68117) 10.00 *Saturday Night Live* (100355) 11.00 *Holiday Inn* (1942) 12.00 *Pages from Skyped*
- SATellite**
- SKY ONE**
- 0.00am *Danger Bay* (75529) 6.30 *Elephant Boy* (30365) 7.00 *Fox Factory* (2222629)
- 12.00 Barnaby Jones** (67689) 1.00pm *Film: Say One For Me* (1959) starring Bing Crosby and Debbie Reynolds (89133) 3.00 *Cartoon* (79529) 4.00 *The Duke of Hazzard* (61724) 5.00 *Joe Vicks* (1980) 6.00 *Tom Haverford's Family* (2025) 6.30 *The Royal Tenenbaums* (Year in Crisis) (57559) 6.00 *Unsolved Mysteries* (17807) 8.00 *Cops I* (67978) 9.30 *Cops II* (68117) 10.00 *Saturday Night Live* (100355) 11.00 *Holiday Inn* (1942) 12.00 *Pages from Skyped*
- SKY NEWS**
- Twenty-four hour news service
- SKY MOVIES+**
- 6.00am *Showcase* (67046)

THE FILM CHANNEL

- 6.30am *Dot and the Koala* (2307932) 7.45 *Dot and the Kangaroo* (776) (2233538); Australian tales, mainly live action and animation about a dot and her animal friends 8.10 *Treasure Island* (1972); Adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic (2307933) 9.15 *Alfred Hitchcock* (1954). The Alfred Hitchcock season continues with this story of a compulsive thief (Tippi Hedren) who is forced into marriage by her wealthy boss (Sean Connery). (Ceefax) (5097220). Ends at 2.00am

LIFESTYLE

- 6.30am *Dot and the Koala* (2307932) 7.45 *Dot and the Kangaroo* (776) (2233538); Australian tales, mainly live action and animation about a dot and her animal friends 8.10 *Treasure Island* (1972); Adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic (2307933) 9.15 *Alfred Hitchcock* (1954). The Alfred Hitchcock season continues with this story of a compulsive thief (Tippi Hedren) who is forced into marriage by her wealthy boss (Sean Connery). (Ceefax) (5097220). Ends at 2.00am

THE SPORTS CHANNEL

- 6.30am *Rainbow the Week* (56588) 7.00 *The Fado Girl Challenge* (67559) 8.00 *Vintage Dancer* (2025) 8.30 *World Cup Sports* (74107) 10.00 *The Boot* (2025) 10.30 *Wrestling* (2026) 12.00pm *Superstar Weekend* (7510) 12.00pm *WWF Wrestling* (2026) 1.00pm *Sports Saturday* (2027) 1.30pm *Football* (2027) 2.00pm *Round Up* (11539) 10.30pm *RingSide* (13334) 12.30am *Sunday Super Sunday* (2028) 1.00am *Atmosphere* (2028) 1.30am *Football* (2028) 2.00am *Wrestling* (2028) 2.30am *Boxing* (2028) 3.00am *Boxing* (2028) 3.30am *Boxing* (2028) 4.00am *Boxing* (2028) 4.30am *Boxing* (2028) 5.00am *Boxing* (2028) 5.30am *Boxing* (2028) 6.00am *Boxing* (2028) 6.30am *Boxing* (2028) 7.00am *Boxing* (2028) 7.30am *Boxing* (2028) 8.00am *Boxing* (2028) 8.30am *Boxing* (2028) 9.00am *Boxing* (2028) 9.30am *Boxing* (2028) 10.00am *Boxing* (2028) 10.30am *Boxing* (2028) 11.00am *Boxing* (2028) 11.30am *Boxing* (2028) 12.00pm *Boxing* (2028) 12.30pm *Boxing* (2028) 1.00pm *Boxing* (2028) 1.30pm 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Please answer the phone, ET

Nigella Lawson, in search of intelligent communication, dials hopefully into outer space, and inner Albert Square

And so, they saw a star in the East. And from Palo Alto did three wise men journey and when they came upon the star they did speak thus saying: "Lo, for we are not cranks, nor truly are we sci-fi nuts but we are wise men and we are scientists." And the wise men did go forth into the desert, which was wilderness, and they did erect radio telescopes and infra-red receivers and they did send out messages into the void that they might learn whether elsewhere in the universe there are wise men who also have wondered out into the desert, and whether those wise men have two heads and know yet the cure for nettle rash. But no one answered.

THE search for extra-terrestrial life has, indeed, long been the province of cranks and sci-fi fantasists. Now it has gone legit. Last Sunday's *Equinox* on Channel 4, *ET - Please Phone Earth*, showed that there are whole schools of scientists just waiting for otherworldly messages. True, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish among them, but the people with degrees and state grants to support their mission are in earnest. Their aim, like the crew of the starship Enterprise, is to boldly go where no man has gone before. But actually sending someone has its drawbacks.

Barney Oliver, who is part of the Nascent search for extra-terrestrial intelligence (Seti), articulated what these might be: "If we were travelling at present spaceship velocities," he told us, "it would take us in the region of 40,000 years to reach our nearest star. If we tried to accelerate the process so that we could get there and back in a

TV REVIEW

human lifetime, the cost of energy required goes up astronomically."

A scientist's little joke, there. "A trip to the nearest star would cost 1,000 years of the world's energy production." Had we but world enough, and time: but we don't, so the answer, the savants surmise, lies in sending radio messages, just to let "them" up there know we exist, and to find out whether they do.

Where these fellows differ from the crackpots is in the appeal to reason. Look, they say, there are billions of other planets twirling away out there. For all we know, most are populated. It is almost impossible to conceive that there could not be life on at least one of them. It's not a dead cert, they admit, but it is "a logical possibility".

In *The Golden Bowl*, Henry James offered a definition of science as "the absence of prejudice backed by the presence of money". In this supercilious, the money is certainly there, but the experiment is tainted with monumental prejudice. That extra-terrestrial life forces might exist, no one quite explained, save by way of assuring us that if aliens were able to send messages in the first place, or understand the billions we're sending them, they must be smart.

But it's the enthusiasts who have it worst. The software used is so good that, in one second, it can sift as much information as is in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. It will, we're told, pick up the one message, "a tell-tale blip of signal", detectable within "the crackle of the universe", which will convey to us such intelligence as "Hi, we're the extra-terrestrial guys". One wonders how these hugely educated people could possibly imagine that the term "extra-terrestrial" could have any meaning for anyone but us.

Somewhere in the contemporary scientific imagination lie aliens frenziedly trying to send messages to us. That they already exist requires something of a leap of the imagination: that they should be busying themselves with our existence requires a self-centredness of cosmic proportions. But for these wise men, there is a "they", and "they" belong to a more advanced technology, possibly willing to give

us all the answers. These scientists may not be sure that these superior intelligent beings will be like us, but even in envisaging them as "unlike" us they can view them only in comparison to humans.

Even the scientists in the programme who warned against the search saw it in terms of human history. What if, just as we colonised America and Australia, the aliens would want to come and colonise us? These chaps — not so far removed from little green men in concept — could act as cosmic aggressors, hitting us with their better technological know-how.

How we arrived at this point from the mere "logical possibility" that extra-terrestrial life forces might exist, no one quite explained, save by way of assuring us that if aliens were able to send messages in the first place, or understand the billions we're sending them, they must be smart.

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Likewise, it isn't so much that these putative aliens might not have the answers to the questions the Nasa team is ready to put to them — "Is there a better way to generate energy through nuclear fusion?" and so on — but that the questions may be meaningless.

But, while they're waiting for



If they are there ... "that aliens should be busying themselves with our existence requires a self-centredness of cosmic proportions".

their extra-terrestrial responses, at least the scientists have found a way of keeping optimistic. They can escape the real world — Somalia and Bosnia, teenage girls being set alight, IRA bombs — and lose themselves in the possible glorious future in the heavens. That must, in some sense, be their motivation, even if it is unacknowledged.

Back on planet Earth, things are not so cheerful. The Christmas editions of *Casualty* and *EastEnders* showed that you do not need to mount vast space projects to encounter communication problems. A domestic stabbing (at the

hands of Dorothy Tutin, no less, an accident resulting from normal family aggression in *Casualty*, Par's drink-and-drive accident, Arthur's adultery and the on-going triangular tension between Sharon, Grant and Phil in *EastEnders*) provided just the note of seasonal cheer needed. Whatever your Christmas, it could hardly be as bad.

This was *Casualty*'s first outing since Julian (Nigel Le Vaillant) walked out the week before last, and he's a loss. With his weary manner and limp good looks, he was always such a convincing consultant that I wonder how many

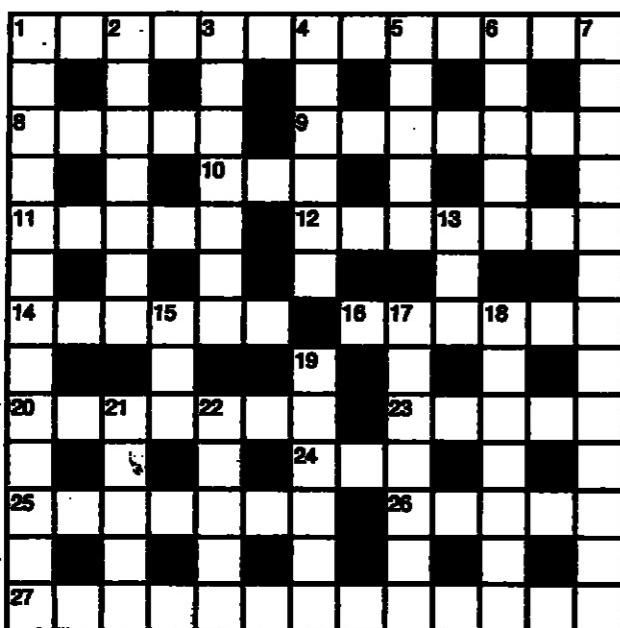
letters have been sent to Holby General asking him to reconsider his resignation. But the Christmas Eve edition did alarmingly well without him. Rob's character is being made slowly more sympathetic in order to fill the gap, and all the actors — particularly Derek Thompson as Charlie — make sure this remains watchable. Since I once spent Christmas in Westminster Children's Hospital, and loved it, I watched with wistful longing.

I couldn't quite wish myself in Albert Square. *EastEnders* has always taken the fine that drama is conflict, and it has become an

addiction. Christmas provided a good fix, despite the fact that yesterday's special edition all but degenerated into a half-hour *Don't Drink and Drive* advertisement.

Arthur's betrayal of Pauline had to happen, I suppose, but I'm not convinced by the scriptwriter's insistence that Arthur would be so relentlessly cheerful about it, as he's always struck me as something of a worrier, or that Pauline would be so unsuspecting. However, I am prepared to suspend my disbelief. Which is more than I can say for the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence.

CONCISE CROSSWORD No 2980



ACROSS
1. Tobacco introducer (6,7)
8. Promotion (3,2)
9. Clumsily assembled (7)
10. Singular (3)
11. Fitters (5)
12. Conscript (7)
14. Recollection (6)
16. Silky hound (6)
20. Casual (7)
23. Pins down (5)
24. Killer whale (3)
25. Spite (7)
26. Unfastened (5)
27. Timed Govt securities (8,5)

SOLUTIONS TO NO 2979
ACROSS: 1 Fort Knox 5 Talc 9 Hammock 10 End up
11 Yoga 12 Erratic 14 Unruly 16 Ferret 19 Lullaby
21 Sif 24 Ovoid 25 Languor 26 Date 27 Tweezers
DOWN: 1 Fahd 2 Romeo 3 Know all 4 Orkney 6 Auditor
7 Capacity 8 Fear 13 Bully off 15 Roll out 17 Es-
sence 18 Bye law 20 Aids 22 Louse 23 Arts

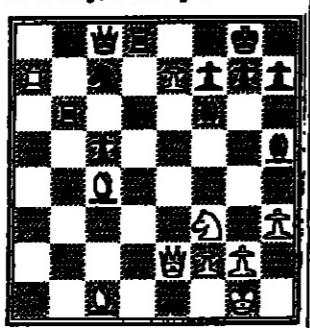
WINNING MOVE

This position is from the game Chandler — Olafsson, Foreign & Colonial Hastings Premier 1990/91. White to play. Can he do better than recapturing the rook on d8? This year's Hastings tournament features the Hungarian prodigy Judit Polgar. Further details from the British Chess Federation on 0424 442500 (Raymond Keene).

Send your answer on a postcard with your name and address to: *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first three correct answers drawn on Thursday next week will win a Batsford chess book. The

answer and the winners will be printed in *The Times* on the following Saturday.

Solution to last Saturday's competition: 1 Rx e8+. The winners will be printed on Saturday, January 2.



Suede polish off the honours

From The Word to the Reading Festival, the best memories of the events of 1992



NOW that nothing is left of 1992 but the metaphorical coffee creams, come along and trawl with me through the year past, back to when there were still caramel legs and those nice chewy orangy chocolate things left in the bottom of the tin — yes, we're looking back at the events of 1992.

To all intents and purposes, Suede happened in 1992 and didn't really leave a lot of room for anyone else, what with their egos blocking up the halfway and half a dozen stupidly beautiful times picking over a bowl of Twigs on the stairs. Brett poufed and spouted perfect quotes, shy girl guitarists Bernard wore a series of incredibly fine trousers, and they all brought a stomping ballet of the erotic to *Top of the Pops*, which made a nice change from The Shamen endlessly prunketing around and being dreadfully unsuitable about drugs. Suede's third single "Sleeping Pills", is out on Nude records in February. I beseech you all on bended knee to purchase a fair few copies of it and keep the Shamen out of my way and off my TV.

The Reading Festival in August was a three-day endurance test of mud, vodka and American bands. The UK's famously bad five, EMF, made sure some small part of that field will remain forever



Sour sweet: the Lemonheads with Evan Dando (centre)

England and showed off a sticky sweaty fistful of tunes from their *Stigma* LP (Parlophone) to much cheering and drinking of over-priced, mucky lager. Cheers.

For those who don't spend Friday nights down the pub, or in a club, or in any way pursuing life of any kind, that teenage postmodern hate, *The Word*, may be a mystery you're happy to keep that way. Basically, *The Word* tries to do something gloriously tacky every week — and usually the bands out-gross it. The all-female aural assault-course L7 flashed their thinly-walled everything, and Evan Dando

of the blessedly perfect Lemonheads was, uh, just great, actually.

REM released *Automatic For The People*, an album of exquisite pain and pointedly didn't tour. Again. Still, it lends life a feeling of continuity. And Morrissey released *Your Arsenal* LP and was a bit controversial about skinheads — if in any way he's inspired racial hatred, he should be led outside by his pointy little quiff and shot. However, the album is lovely, and I and my sad withdrawn friends will be playing it a lot.

Sonic Youth strapped on

their super-duper adult-killing guitars and whined around the British Isles on their Huge Rock Star mopeds, powered only by their vast reservoirs of angst and disgust and Kim Gordon's cute drawly way of singing "I don't wanna/I don't think so". There's an album, too, *Dirty*, but no-one's sent me a copy yet. Cough.

Also trawling around stadiums were the very wonderful and shiny Cure and the very magical and velvety Cranes. The Cranes will be releasing an album in 1993, and I'll be interviewing them then.

And crying leads us oh-so-neatly on to Buffalo Tom. The Toms released a single called "Tail Lights Fade". Please go out and find this song. Stretching, yearning, burning — all good words to use if you're a music journalist. The lead singer's voice hits some kind of emotional note as his voice frays and dissolves. "I've hit the wall, I'm about to fall."

While traversing the vale of tears and perfect, untouched sadness, The Red House Painters, from some stripped and broken part of the US, put out *Down Colourful Hill*, the kind of album that breathes gently into your face and welcomes you to a sweet drift through the dead part of the night and the numb part of the day. I just thought I'd stick a plug in for it there, even though it doesn't really fit in or aid the flow of words or anything.

And what does 1993 hold?

Well, for me, lots of getting into gigs free and hanging out with the bands in a really unselfconscious way; and for Elvis Presley — remaining resolutely dead. Whatever's out there, we'll take guns and we'll cope with it. Good luck ya!

CAITLIN MORAN

GUILTY SECRETS: Sir Michael Day



RACISM is no joke, and television has spared us none of its horrors, such as those chilling reports of "ethnic cleansing" in eastern Europe. But there are programmes that show a lighter side. Race is a hazardous subject for humour, but Lenny Henry carries it off brilliantly, with material which from others might seem in poor taste. I also warn to *Desmond's*. It is affectionate comedy, and makes us feel that a multiracial society can mean a lot of fun.

Sir Michael Day is chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality.

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